THE CROW flies again: Sequel scoop

COMICS scene

NOV. #53
K47269
U.K.£2.95

Rob Liefeld's extreme explanations!

NEIL GAIMAN BRINGS AN END TO SANDMAN

ARE COMICS DYING?

THE ART OF MOEBIUS

Two faces of Tommy Lee Jones

$4.99 U.S./$6.50 CANADA

0 71896 47269 1 11

EXPERIENCE THE WONDERS AND MARVELS OF A THOUSAND WORLDS

SPHEREWALKER™

SOURCE CARDS

Spherewalker Source Cards put the mysteries of the spheres in your hands. The 90 collectable cards in the Spherewalker Source Card set illustrate scenes from the infinite universe of the EVERWAY™ roleplaying game.

Each card portrays some of the strange people and the perilous creatures that spherewalkers encounter on their journeys.

Spherewalker Source Cards are easily adapted for use with other fantasy roleplaying games. Available in packs of 10 randomly sorted cards, with 36 packs in each display box.

All Original Art • $1.95 per pack • Fall '95

Wizards OF THE COAST

EVERWAY

ALTER EGO GAMES

Wizards of the Coast Customer Service: (206) 624-0933

© 1995 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved. Illustrations by Jeff Miracola, Dermot Power, and John Matson. Everway, Alter Ego Games and Spherewalker are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Wizards of the Coast is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

ICE AGE™

TURN UP THE HEAT!

***Ice Age*™ is an all-new environment that can be played as a stand-alone trading card game or as an expansion for Magic: The Gathering™.**

MAGIC The Gathering

60-card starter deck $8.95 • 15-card booster pack $2.95

Wizards of the Coast Customer Service: (206) 624-0933

Wizards of the Coast

Magic: The Gathering and *Ice Age* are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Wizards of the Coast is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Illustration by Mike Raabe. © 1995 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.

Art: Moebius/Copyright 1995 Starwatcher Graphics

Mickey Mouse Art: Copyright 1995 The Walt Disney Company

COMICS® scene

On the Comics Scene

6 WORD BALLOONS

9 LETTERING
Missives haunt the Dark Knight.

15 ARE COMICS DYING?
The future looks grim & grey for the four-color medium.

28 OK, IS ROB LIEFELD OVERWORKED?
He's the very image of a comic-book entrepreneur.

34 THE ART OF MOEBIUS
That soft-spoken genius considers his many masterworks.

40 RETURN OF THE ROOK
Here's a time-traveling cowboy gunning against Chaos.

54 NEIL GAIMAN SPEAKS
As *Sandman* ends, there are new dreams beginning.

64 CLASSIFIED

On the Comics Screen

21 DUAL IDENTITY
Tommy Lee Jones shows both sides of Two-Face.

26 AGAIN, THE CROW
From beyond the grave, vengeance cries out.

44 THEY SAVED... MICKEY'S BRAIN
And then they actually let the Mouse run away with it.

48 MACHINE MAN
Artist Chris Halls fashions Mean Machine on-screen, too.

66 ANIMATION SCENE
The quest for great animators is underway in Hollywood.

70 THE REPORTER

COMICS SCENE is published bi-monthly by Starlog Group, Inc. (under exclusive license from Comics World Corp.) 475 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. This is COMICS SCENE #53, (overall series #64). COMICS SCENE is a registered trademark of Comics World Corp. (Canadian GST number: R-124704826) (ISSN 1053-0398) Entire contents copyright © 1995 Starlog Group, Inc. All rights reserved. Reprint or reproduction of any material in part or in whole without the publishers' written permission is strictly forbidden. COMICS SCENE accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, photos or art, but if submittals are accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope, they will be seriously considered and, if necessary, returned. Products advertised are not necessarily endorsed by COMICS SCENE, and any views expressed in editorial copy are not necessarily those of COMICS SCENE. Subscription rates: $19.99 one year [six issues] delivered in the U.S. only. Canadian & Foreign subscriptions: $25.99 in U.S. funds only. **New subscriptions:** send directly to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Avenue South, NY, NY 10016. **Notification of change of address:** send to COMICS SCENE Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 132, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0132 or call toll-free 1-800-877-5549. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to COMICS SCENE Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 132, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0132. Printed in U.S.A. **Customer service** (toll-free): 1-800-877-5549

KNOWLEDGE is POWER

This new *Pocket Players' Guide* for *Magic: The Gathering—Fourth Edition*™ contains updated rules, deck-building strategies, the complete *Fourth Edition* card list, the latest Duelists' Convocation tournament rules, as well as background information and a timeline for Dominia.

MAGIC The Gathering

Fall '95 • $7.95

Wizards of the Coast Customer Service: (206) 624-0933

Wizards

Magic: The Gathering is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Wizards of the Coast is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Illustration by Quinton Hoover. © 1995 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.

WORD BALLOONS

What's the deal with the comic book industry? That's a question we seem to be asking ourselves with increasing frequency around the COMICS SCENE offices. (It has officially replaced "You gonna eat that?" as our most often uttered query.) Just as comics seem poised to conquer the world of mainstream entertainment, the business has gone into *le dumper*. Its once stable distribution network has been scrambled, and even the largest companies are feeling the crunch.

So, what *is* the deal with the comic book industry? In this issue, we set out to get some answers. We asked comic book and pulp historian Will Murray to check comics' collective pulse in order to determine if it's really a goner. He gives his prognosis on page 15. On page 28, Rob Liefeld looks at the situation from the perspective of the not-so-new kid on the block struggling to chart a new course now that his initial, steamy honeymoon with the fans is over. Jean "Moebius" Giraud and Neil Gaiman check in from the profound/arty/European front on pages 34 and 54 respectively.

Now, I know what you're saying at this point: "But, I saw *Batman Forever* 20 times and so did everyone I know. How can comics be dead?" Of course, this is exactly the point. It's the *medium* of comics that is in trouble, not the message. A big part of the problem is that the traditional message of mainstream comics—huge, powerful good guys beating the bejeezus out of huge, powerful bad guys—is being co-opted by the mainstream media. It's alive and well in the movies, on TV and in video games. It's there overtly in *Batman Forever*, but it's also at the core of everything from *Die Hard* and *Doom* to pro wrestling. This is not a new phenomenon, but changes in consumer tastes and rapidly evolving technology have accelerated the process. We *will* believe a man can fly, and everyone will pay millions to see him do it on the big screen.

Here at COMICS SCENE, we've always been aware of this trend, which is why we focus a great deal of attention on comics in the movies, TV and animation. But this doe not mean we're going to abandon comic books like some cheap date when a sexier new medium saunters by.

It would be a big mistake to count comics out. While *Batman Forever* may pack a lot more visceral punch than the average Batman comic (and costs just about the same these days), there are still things that comics can do better than any other form. For a full discussion of the unique power of comics, check out Scott McCloud's wonderful book *Understanding Comics*, which ably reveals why there's so much more to comics than muscle guys roughhousing. Exasperating and misunderstood as it can be, the comic book is still a worthwhile and powerful means of communication. Who knows, maybe being pushed back into the underground will do comics a world of good.

Back in issue #50, we polled 50 comics professionals on where *they* thought the industry was headed. A large number of the respondees said they believed the future of comics was in computers. There is no doubt that computers will continue to greatly impact the production of comics, as they have all publishing. But do you really want to read your comics off a computer screen? Will all comics come on CD-ROMs, bundled with a game based on the characters and ads for the toys? Geez, I hope not. Even with hypertext linking and multimedia whistles and bells, I for one don't want to view my comics through some glass screen. Yuck.

A more welcome and far-reaching impact of computers is on comics fandom. Say you flipped for those comics adaptations of the *Isis* Saturday morning TV show DC did in the '70s. You probably thought you were the only one in the world who liked them, right? Now, all you need is a computer and a modem and you might discover that there is a whole World Wide Web page devoted to those *Isis* comics. You say everyone at your high school thinks Dan Clowes is a snobby misanthrope? Now you can hang out online with a bunch of people who think he's just fab.

To provide a hub for all this activity, a happening electronic comicbook lounge of sorts, COMICS SCENE is going online with the new Microsoft Network. Starting this month, we'll be there every day, bringing all your favorite COMICS SCENE features right into your home or office. All you have to do is join the Microsoft Network (it's available in the Windows 95 upgrade and elsewhere) and look for us right alongside our sister magazines STARLOG and FANGORIA. You'll be able to connect with other fans, check out the latest releases, hear what the pros have to say, even respond to the editors the instant you read an article. Tune in, turn on and drop by.

As long as you're out there enjoying them, comics can't be dead.

—Michael Stewart/Managing Editor

Editor David McDonnell • **Managing Editors** Marc Bernardin, Michael Stewart • **Contributing Editors** David Hutchison, Anthony Timpone, Michael Gingold • **Consultants** Jean-Marc Lofficier, Kerry O'Quinn • **Senior Art Director** Jim McLernon • **Art Director** Evan Metcalf • **Designers** Yvonne Jang, Freddy Collado, Allen Kushner, George Saravia • **Senior Contributing Writers** Kim Howard Johnson, Bob Miller, Will Murray • **Contributing Writers** Frederic Albert Levy, Joe Nazzaro, Marc Shapiro, Aaron Vanek • **Financial Manager** Joan Baetz • **Marketing Director** Frank M. Rosner • **Circulation Manager** Maria Damiani • **Typesetter** Jean E. Krevor • **Classified Director** Tim Clark • **Staff** Kim Lamparielio, Debbie Irwin, Dee Erwine, Katharine Repole, Jose Soto, Jennifer Leahy, Ali Lemer.

Pres/Publisher Norman Jacobs • **Exec VP** Rita Eisenstein • **Associate Publisher** Milburn Smith • **VP/Circulation Director** Art Schulkin • **Executive Art Director** W.R. Mohalley

Thank You: Chris Bailey, Sarah Baisley, Steve Behling, Laurie Bradach, Andreas Deja, Terry Erdmann, Neil Gaiman, Jean Giraud, Eric Goldberg, David S. Goyer, Howard Green, Chris Halls, R. Matthew Hawkins, Steve Hulett, Tommy Lee Jones, Fumi Kitahara, Rob Liefeld, Maureen McTigue, Bob Muleady, Tim Pope, Joe Simon, Tom Sniegoski, Jeff Walker.

For Advertising Sales: The Faust Company, 24050 Madison Street, Suite 101, Torrance, CA 90505 (310) 373-9604 FAX (310) 373-8760 Attention: Dick Faust

Cover Art: Death: Moebius/Courtesy Starwatcher Graphics/Character: Trademark & Copyright 1995 DC Comics, Inc. Corner Art: By & Copyright 1995 Rob Liefeld.

The following prevue has been approved for all audiences.

Coming soon to cyberspace near you, Netrunner™,
the new trading card game from Wizards of the Coast.

NR
THIS GAME IS NOT YET RATED
CONSULT YOUR LOCAL RETAILER FOR RATING INFORMATION

R. TALSORIAN GAMES, INC.

Wizards of the Coast

Wizards of the Coast is a trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Cyberpunk 2020® is R. Talsorian's trademark for its adventure game of the dark future. The R. Talsorian Games, Inc., logo and the term Netrunner are trademarks of R. Talsorian Games, Inc. Illustration by Randy Gallegos. ©1995 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.

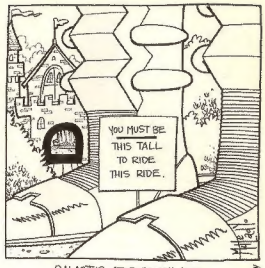
STARLOG GROUP
msn.
DOESN'T COST THAT MUCH!

YOU TOO WILL BE SHOCKED AND AMAZED BY...

COMICS® Scene ONLINE

YES TRUTH ACOLYTES! NOW YOU, THE COMIC BOOK CHOSEN, CAN BE PART OF THE 21ST CENTURY--TODAY! COMICS SCENE MAGAZINE IS GOING ONLINE WITH THE MICROSOFT NETWORK, AND WE'RE READY TO GIVE YOU EVERYTHING THERE IS TO GIVE ABOUT COMICS--NEWS, DIRT, INTERVIEWS, MOVIE UPDATES, REVIEWS AND MUCH MORE! SO JACK IN! IT'S COOL! (REALLY, IT IS. WE SWEAR.) EXCELSIUS!

LETTERING



GALACTUS AT DISNEYLAND.

Art: Bob Muleady

Personal replies are unlikely. Other fans & advertisers may contact readers whose letters are printed here. To avoid this, mark your letter "Please Withhold My Address." Otherwise, we retain the option to publish it. Write:

COMICS SCENE
475 Park Avenue So.,
8th Flr.
New York, NY 10016
or Email via the Internet:
STARLOG@aol.com

...They suckered me again. I knew from stills and previews that *Batman Forever* was going to be a visually impressive film. It had a great cast in fantastic Bob Ringwood costumes, and promised more action than the two previous films combined. Two-Face's origin can be a powerful, emotional story, and that sounded like a good balance for the clever mind-games of the Riddler. In interviews, director Joel Schumacher sounded like he had a strong grasp on the characters, and promised a theme of duality. It looked like they had *all* the elements of a film that would come much closer to the Batman I knew and loved than the previous Tim Burton entries. Now if only they had a good story and kept from getting too silly.

The opening sequence says it all. Elliot Goldenthal's Batman theme underscores a progression of iconic imagery: the belt, the gloves, a black bat on a gold shield. The Gigeresque Batmobile rising from the depths in a storm of light and steam. The Dark Knight takes his place beside his metallic steed...*and makes a drive-thru joke?!* It was only the beginning of a film that couldn't decide whether to take its subject matter seriously or play it for laughs. The theme of duality comes across mainly in the form of a story that vacillates between drama and camp, and between the magnificent and the inane.

This business of two villains per film must stop. Not only have we exhausted the Big Five in only *three* films, but (as in *Batman Returns*) both villains got shorted due to a lack of time. Two-Face is my favorite Batman villain, because of his obsession with duality and dichotomy, and because knowing that somewhere in this monster is a former friend and ally, D.A. Harvey Dent, gives him an emotional weight that the other villains lack. The film chooses to skip ahead to a fully-realized "Harvey Two-Face," as they call him, with only a brief news report as an explanation of his origin and a tantalizing glimpse of what might have been. Lost are the scenes of Harvey's sanity shattering in reaction to his horrific disfigurement, the frantic scarring of one profile on his lucky coin to mirror his own face and psyche and the drama of Batman having to deliver his friend to the care of Arkham Asylum. "Harvey Two-Face" has no dramatic character arc. He is loud and crazy at the film's beginning, and maintains a consistent level of volume and mania until the end, with little suggestion of his dual nature beyond the wonderful costumes and his under-used molls. The film introduces the great idea of having Sugar and Spice vying for Harvey's attention by appealing to the respective sides of his personality, but then it's dropped, having them only used as window dressing for Harvey and Nygma.

Art: Bob Muleady

To me, the essence of the Riddler has always been a character with low self-esteem, who can only feel good about himself by proving his intellectual superiority to others. The only person he could never outwit was Batman, hence the obsessive game of riddles aimed at the Dark Knight, the Riddler's only worthy opponent. This motivation was dropped in favor of a stalker-like envy/obsession with Bruce Wayne. This might have worked, but it was awkwardly mixed with the plot device of technology allowing the Riddler to increase his own intellect by feeding off the brain waves of others. The mechanics of all this technology (disappointingly depicted as an unconvincing hodgepodge of techno-junk topped with a *blender?!*) are a little fuzzy, as there's really no noticeable "smartening" of the Riddler, and no apparent adverse effects in his victims. The mind-reading aspect seems only a plot device to get Two-Face and the Riddler to Wayne Manor in the biggest lapse of Manor security since Vicki Vale wandered into the Bat Cave. At one point, the Riddler asks, "Was that over the top? I never can tell." Yes, Ed. It *was* over the top. Whether the fault lies with Jim Carrey, the director or the writers may be the greatest riddle of all.

The Riddler's riddles seemed almost lost in all these hijinks, but they ultimately point Batman towards the Riddler's identity, which came as a total and complete surprise to me, because up until the moment of revelation, I assumed he *knew* who the Riddler was, since it was so *bloody obvious*. This is followed immediately with a shot of the Riddler's island lair, which is huge and seething with glowing green mind-energy that lights up the sky. You need to solve *riddles* to find this guy?

Wayne/Batman's relationship with Dr. Chase Meridian is rushed and falls flat. Meridian comes off as an unprofessional nympho, and Wayne/Batman's attraction to her is unconvinc-

Art: Bob Mulcahy

BLACK MARKET COMICS.

ing. The only chemistry here seems hormonal, and I never saw Batman as keeping his brains in his pants. (Maybe that's what they were trying to tell us with that gratuitous butt shot...) The ending felt like Vicki Vale all over again, and I have to wonder if the inevitable fourth film will find Dr. Meridian conveniently gone to make room for the inevitable fourth love interest. (Does anyone really go to a Batman movie for a love story?)

Despite all these complaints (and dozens of other nit-picks), I thought there was a lot to like in the film. The many groaners were no worse than some of the atrocities in *Batman Returns*, and it had more good points. Good music, great costumes and astonishing production design made the movie a sensory feast, and the flashbacks to the murder of Bruce's parents were haunting images appropriately torn from the pages of *The Dark Knight Returns* and *Batman: Year One*. Gotham City never looked better, and never-before-seen-on-celluloid landmarks like Wayne Enterprises and Arkham Asylum were well-realized. Most of the Batman imagery was stunning, especially his skylight drop and the Batwing bursting through the Bat-signal's image on the clouds. (Nit-pick: Why wasn't the projected bat-image the same shape as the one on the signal?)

Val Kilmer makes a great Bruce Wayne/Batman, bringing a physicality to the character that Michael Keaton's otherwise fine and underrated performance lacked. Finally we have a Batman who climbs, leaps, mops up gaggles of thugs and who can maintain credibility with his muscle-sculpted shirt off! The interplay between Wayne, Dick Grayson and the always-wonderful Michael Gough's Alfred offers some of the finest points of the movie.

Overall, I also liked Chris O'Donnell's Robin. Dick's path to becoming Batman's partner was satisfying, even if you knew where it would inevitably lead. And it was clever seeing the Flying Graysons' outfits echoed in Bob Ringwood's riff on the current comic book costume for the Boy Wonder. The "Holy rusted metal" joke was a cute idea, but not well-delivered. A well-placed "Holy s**t, Batman!" might have been better.

I wouldn't mind seeing Joel Schumacher direct a fourth Batman film. He has a great visual style and is capable of delivering the goods. I just hope that future installments have a foundation as strong as the early Sam Hamm drafts of the first *Batman* film and most of the animated series. The kids will come because it's Batman. If they want an adult audience, then they need to have a satisfying story, too.

Christopher Jones
Minneapolis, MN

...Well, with *Batman Forever* opening to the biggest box-office weekend ever, congratulations are in order to director Joel Schumacher. For that and also for creating a film that redefines the term "comic-book movie." *Batman Forever* did a good job of capturing some of the more "heavy" material of the original (Bruce's painful flashbacks), and mixing it with a much more action-oriented storyline, with great characters, dialogue that made sense and a Gotham City that was still dark (about on par with the first film), but didn't make you feel like you needed to take a shower afterwards. These are things that *Batman Returns* totally and completely missed the mark on. I also liked the way (in *Forever*) they re-created the flashback scene from the original, but without changing it, which would have been a horrendous mistake.

Michael Keaton *was* missed, but Val Kilmer wonderfully made the role his own, resulting in an exceptional replacement. He delivered some of the film's sillier lines with a seriousness that didn't turn it into a comedy or make it camp. How he did that, I'll never know.

I wasn't really looking forward to the introduction of Robin into the

Art: Bob Mulcahy

WHEN HEROES PARTY.

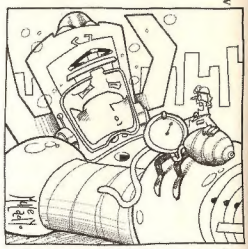
series, but they handled it in a much better manner than I had thought they would. Batman is not a boy scout, and now, Robin isn't either. Robin was almost my favorite part, believe it or not. His circus origin scene hit the nail directly on the head as far as bringing it to the big screen. I really liked what they did with his character. The crowd I saw the film with on opening day burst into applause when he made his first appearance in full Robin gear. Chris O'Donnell was great!! However, by the time they (possibly) get around to making the fourth installment, he'll be *way* too old.

Jim Carrey was unequalled as the Riddler! He did things in this film that Robin Williams and all other Riddler hopefuls could never have done! He *was* the Riddler! The same way Jack Nicholson *was* the Joker and Michelle Pfeiffer *was* the Catwoman in the first two pictures. When I saw him for the first time in costume, with his cane, I thought, "the Riddler incarnate!" Carrey kept in character throughout the film. And he was more than enough villain for this outing, which leads me to my next point.

Two-Face I probably could have done without. He was always one of my favorite villains, but Tommy Lee Jones' performance was surprisingly low-key. He was neither brilliant nor silly but menacing. He just sort of went through the motions. And he nearly disappeared when Carrey's Riddler was around. Don't get me wrong; when it comes to Jones, "going through the motions" is still pretty damn good, but I guess I just expected more. As I watched, I also couldn't help but wonder what Billy Dee Williams might have brought to the role. Oh well, Jones wasn't horrible, much better than Danny DeVito's Penguin, and he and Jim Carrey had good chemistry together.

Nicole Kidman was excellent as Dr. Chase Meridian. She was ravishing in appearance, and she had a much larger screen presence in *Batman Forever* than she did in any of her previous films, despite falling into the clichéd damsel in distress role and not getting her own action figure or glass at McDonald's. She was one of the movie's bigger surprises.

As I mentioned earlier, the storyline was much more along the line of a comic book this time around, making for a very different film sequel. But Joel Schumacher still brought back the heroic feel of Batman from the original, with unforgettable images of him swooping down from his vehicle with the Bat-signal ablaze behind him in the night sky.



Art: Bob Mulcahy

"LAY OFF THE M-CLASS PLANETS FOR A WHILE..."

The sets and costumes were

once again great, after taking a short break for *Returns*, where they were good, but not up to the standards of this series. The new Batmobile was breathtaking, although, and I may be alone in this, I still have a certain loyalty to the first one. Michael Gough and Pat Hingle were again exceptional in their small, but meaningful, roles.

The musical score by Elliot Goldenthal was acceptable, but it didn't come anywhere close to matching the energy or greatness of Danny Elfman's crashing score from the first two. It almost didn't feel like a *Batman* movie without Elfman's theme. It was not easy to overlook, but it wasn't impossible.

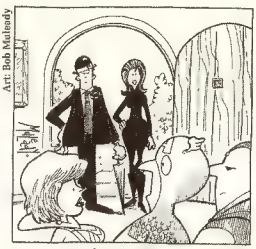
The film's climax was the weakest part. It was too silly and unsatisfying. However, it was action-packed and still miles better than the claustrophobic finale of *Batman Returns*. I don't quite understand why they took the Arkham Asylum opener out of the film, but at least they left it in the closing. I wouldn't have wanted to miss out on Dr. Burton, Joel Schumacher's obvious homage to Tim Burton, his good friend and the series' initial director.

Batman Forever was solid entertainment. It was more humorous than the first two, but it was anything but silly. I was very nervous when I heard that they were going to make this one more "playful," but I was pleased with the direction they chose. The filmmakers were careful not to cross the line which would make the film stupid and very un-Batman. As you can tell, I liked it, although it wasn't as rich as the original. So, I *strongly* urge Warner Bros. to get back Sam Hamm for number four and all other subsequent films.

Until then...*Batman Forever*!
James Ferace
P.O. Box 125
Ledyard, CT 06339

...Of course, I had to see it opening day; it was worth the effort. *Batman Forever* is totally awesome. It is, without a doubt, the best of the *Batman* movies. I'll bet Michael Keaton and Robin Williams are kicking themselves for jumping ship.

At first, I was a little worried at how the Riddler would be handled. When Williams was announced to play the part, then Jim Carrey, I was worried that we would get a bad reprise of Frank Gorshin's performance from the TV show. While Carrey was a hoot, he brought a little bit more to the Riddler than just a maniacal laugh. In fact, I did feel a twinge of sympathy for Edward Nygma in the beginning. After seeing the movie, maybe Mickey Dolenz *could* have done it.



"THEY SAY THEY'VE BEEN AVENGERS FOR YEARS!"

I thought that Tommy Lee Jones put a little too much of a happy spin on Two-Face. I would have preferred the traditional Phantom-of-the-Opera, tragic personality. The story could have gone more into the friendship between Batman/Bruce Wayne and the former District Attorney, Harvey Dent. There was just a hint of it at the end.

Nicole Kidman, whom I usually find to be one of the blandest women in movies, also surprised me. I think she may be the best love interest that Bruce Wayne has had yet (including Michelle "Catwoman" Pfeiffer). But I would still have still liked to have seen what Rene Russo could have done in this role. With Dr. Meridian's knowledge of the martial arts and Batman's identity, could we be seeing the future Batgirl (or Batwoman)? Which brings me to the Dynamic Duo itself. Val Kilmer made such a good Bruce Wayne/Batman that I wonder why he wasn't considered back in 1989. I probably would have used a younger boy for Robin, like around the age of 12. But, on the whole, Chris O'Donnell did a good job.

The screenplay seemed to have combined elements of the three Robins: the circus background and killing of relatives (Dick Grayson) by Two-Face (Jason Todd) and the accidental discovery of Batman's identity (Tim Drake). The movie also seemed to incorporate elements from the TV series (the final rescue was vintage Adam West/ Burt Ward, and the final shot reminded me of the show's opening credits).

I do have some questions, though: First, did they really need actresses the stature of Drew Barrymore and Debi Mazar to play Sugar and Spice? They could have used *anyone* for those roles. Second, just how many people *are* going to find out Batman's identity? Also, will we get a movie where Batman's enemy survives at the end (Joker, Penguin, and Two-Face have bitten the dust)? But, most importantly, once you drive the Batmobile onto a roof, *how* do you get it back on the street in one piece?

Some reviewers and columnists have made a big point about the male pairings in *Batman Forever*, one even referring to it as "the gayest straight film ever made." These are probably the same people who thought that *The Lion King* was racist, sexist and homophobic. Some people even go so far as to say that Batman is looking at Robin's crotch when he asks, "Who's your tailor?" From that camera angle, how can you tell where Batman's looking? I think he looks Robin over head to toe before asking the question. And Two-Face's and Riddler's behavior is no more bizarre than any other comic-book villains'. In other words, folks, *get lives!*

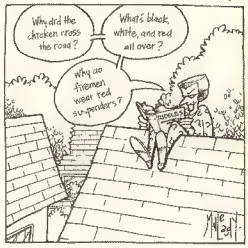
Willie Holmes
8453 S. Saginaw Avenue
Chicago, IL 60617

...I am a great fan of your magazine and I really like your Lettering section about people's views on current comics movies and ideas. I really liked *Batman Forever* and I'm glad it's doing very well. The action was fantastic and the visuals and sets were stunning. Val Kilmer is a wonderful actor and was a good choice to take over the role from Michael Keaton, who is also a great actor. This is a different movie than the two before it, a lighter and more colorful picture that's much easier on the eyes.

If there is a *Batman IV*, I have an idea: have False Face and Poison Ivy terrorize Gotham City. False Face can masquerade as Batman and make the city think Batman has gone bad. Let Poison Ivy try to seduce Bruce Wayne as her alter-ego to fund her program of preserving trees. Also, introduce Batgirl; I think she should be played by Sandra Bullock, because she's a great actress and would be great for the role.

Jason Shepard
3258 Landmark Street #B4
Greenville, NC 27834

...I'm sure one of the summer's two most asked questions will be "Who shot Mr. Burns?" (the other being, "Did *anyone* watch the season finale of *Lois & Clark* instead of *The Simpsons*?"). As a trained detective—well, trained by the fact that I've read *Batman* comic books my whole life—I spotted the clues instantly. Clue #1—and this was rather brazen of them as they used it in the promos of the show which aired constantly for a week—was when Burns falls on the sundial, one hand lands by the W and the other by the S (W.S.). Keeping those initials in mind, I went back and watched the show again. Clue #2 was Principal Skinner's diploma—his full name is W. Seymour Skinner. Clue #3 was Waylon Smithers. Clue #4 was Grampa Simpson's gun—a Smith & Wesson. Clue #5 was the bartender's liquor license—his name is Moe Sleznak (from Burns' point-of-view the way he fell, the W on the sundial would look like an M, which could also mean Sideshow Mel or


Art: Bob Mulready
Why did the chicken cross the road?
What's black, white, and read all over?
Why do Frenchmen wear red suspenders?
Hmmmm...
RIDDLER ON THE ROOF.

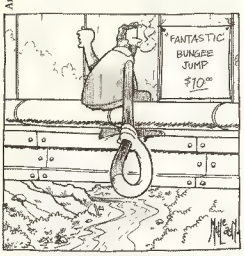
even Maggie Simpson). Clue #6, when Burns falls, his jacket opens and you see his gun is not in its holster.

On examining these facts I deduced that Smithers is most likely a decoy clue, just as Sue Ellen was in the Who Shot J.R. case. (I predict that next season's opener will begin with Smithers waking up in a parking lot and not remembering anything from the night before.) I am willing to say it was Principal Skinner who did it, although I'm not ruling out the scenario that Burns encountered any one of the suspects listed above, but actually shot himself when he tried to get his gun out of his holster.

So, what are the odds in Vegas?

As for *Batman Forever*, back in 1992, Michael Keaton said that if another actor were to play Batman, and he was really good, Keaton would be very jealous. Well Mike, you better schedule a session with a therapist. *Batman Forever* was just what Joel Schumacher said it would be—a living comic book, and a 1940s comic book at that. An incredibly fast-moving, enjoyable, very likable film with humor which, thankfully, was not camp, but reminiscent of the wisecracks and snappy dialogue of '40s comics and the 1943 *Batman* serial. In fact, *Forever* almost seemed like a live-action

Art: Bob Mulcahy



WHAT REED RICHARDS HAS BEEN UP TO.

episode of *Batman: The Animated Series* in its prime. Plus, the film had its fair share of darkness and drama.

All the action scenes were excellent, and Val Kilmer very easily takes the Batman/Bruce Wayne role for his own. While not quite as brooding and complex as Keaton in the first film, Kilmer far outshines Keaton's blander, more wooden performance in *Batman Returns*. Dick Grayson, as played by Chris O'Donnell, was just about perfect. I am very pleased that he was portrayed as a true circus vagabond, rather than the preppy Beaver Cleaver type used in other incarnations, including most comic books. One of the movie's highlights is a scene where Dick steals the Batmobile for a joyride and ends up saving a girl from a gang.

Michael Gough gives another superb performance as Alfred, but Pat Hingle's Commissioner Gordon role is still too *small*! Jim Carrey was excellent as the Riddler. It was very unique to make Edward Nygma, basically, an insane stalker. While at times it looked like Carrey was just being himself, there are a few parts where he comes off as very chilling. Nicole Kidman did very well in elevating a part that, with a lesser actress, would have come off as a B movie Shannon Tweed type role.

However, this film was not perfect. It definitely had flaws. The Danny Elfman theme was sorely missed. At the very least, they should have used it over the opening and closing credits. Tommy Lee Jones, as Two-Face, was trying too hard to imitate Jack Nicholson's Joker instead of developing the real Two-Face character. Also, what's with this "Harvey Two-Face" name? The whole bit about Riddler's brain-reading TV box needed to be improved; it was far too cartoony (not comic-bookish at all). Also, if Schumacher does the next film, he must be very careful not to put any more comedy in it, or God forbid, go campy. With *Forever* he was, at times, dangerously close to that fine line. I wish Warner Bros. would hire Sam Hamm to write the fourth installment. It's simply what's best for the characters and the franchise.

But all in all, *Batman Forever* was highly enjoyable and an excellent film, faithful to the '43 serial, '40s comics, the animated series and even some parallels to the old, unused Tom Mankiewicz script. In rating it, I say it's better than *Returns*, but not quite as good as the '89 original. So, what's next? The return of Catwoman? Christopher Lloyd as the Scarecrow? Clint Eastwood as Ra's al Ghul and Pamela Lee as Talia? Roddy McDowall as Mad Hatter? Or perhaps the Joker and the Penguin, together at last?

Lee Solomon
2839 Marlbank
Sterling Hts, MI 48310

...It's nice to see that someone like Akiva Goldsman finally admits that "Jim Carrey's performance as the Riddler is an homage to Frank Gorshin, the 1960s Riddler," and that he looked to the classic '60s television series for inspiration. I think the new '90s Robin, complete with an earring, sideburns and black leathe,r is a rather sad metaphor on how values have declined in the 30 years since Burt Ward first portrayed the role. Even Bob Kane couldn't understand why the producers put an earring on his creation. I don't think updating characters in a '90s kind of way is at all a compliment. The characters on the TV show all had good, old-fashioned values that kids could learn and aspire to. Not so with the current movie series, as was plainly obvious to many parents who retreated back to the TV show after hearing of the horrific, disgusting and unnecessary violence in the second *Batman* movie.

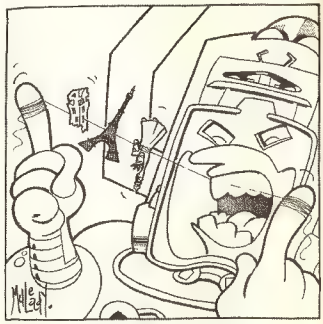
It would be nice for a change that Hollywood reflect the traditional values of most Americans and not the liberal gratuitous sex and violence that Hollywood loves to show. They're not helping the young people of America, only hurting them in pursuit of the almighty buck.

Christopher Krieg
430 Westgate Road
Catonsville, MD 21229

...Last year, this publication was kind enough to print a letter I had written concerning the original (and to date the only) movie version of *The Fantastic Four*, and the unfairness of its shelving on the part of the Neue Constantin company. Since then, a few things have happened.

Firstly, although—as was to be expected—I heard nothing from Neue Constantin, I did receive several catalogs from many fine comic book stores across the country, as well as a

Art: Bob Mulcahy



GALACTUS FLOSSING.

series of unbelievably rude letters from a Hollywood producer (this gent actually had nothing to do with the *Fantastic Four* film, but he seemed to think it was his duty to heap insults, first on the picture and those involved in it, then on me personally).

In this missive, I would once again urge Neue Constantin to officially release *The Fantastic Four*. At this point, with the movie on bootleg video—thanks to some thrice-blessed individual who knew the flick was worth a look—they have nothing to lose and a great deal to gain from the people (and there are many of us out here) who would not only rent, but also buy this unpretentious, inoffensive and above all, fun motion picture.

The cast are all perfectly chosen for their roles and do a superb job, though it was a bit odd to hear Reed Richards speak like a regular person, and a Doctor Doom with a sense of humor (sounds odd, I know, but it works!). It took a little getting used to. The Thing costume is phenomenal, the music by the brothers Wurst is the best and Oley Sassone's direction keeps the action flowing and the story remarkably coherent; this picture doesn't look the slightest

bit rushed. Yes, the special FX are below par, but so what?

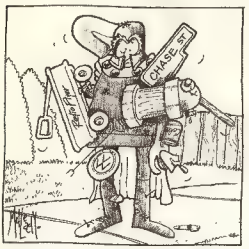
Strange, isn't it, that a genuinely good film like *The Fantastic Four* gets stuck on a shelf while a true mess like *Plan Nine From Outer Space* achieves legendary status. Go figure Hollywood!

Peter Heimsoth
1155 S. Church Avenue
Lombard, IL 60148-4123

...When I first read of Disney's upcoming series, *Duck Daze*, way back in the Animation Scene column in issue #43, I was delighted. I love the Disney ducks, and although I get excited every time I learn of a new Disney Afternoon series, news of a third duck series (the first two being *DuckTales* and *Darkwing Duck*) absolutely thrilled me, even though I would have to wait more than a year for it to come out (fall '95). I thought about the series every day. My excitement built when, in Animation Scene, a synopsis of the basic details of the series was given. I couldn't wait.

Now, I love Disney's *Gargoyles* TV series too. So when I first heard that the series would expand from one day a week to four days a week, and 52 new second-season episodes would be produced, I was delighted. Now there were two things from Disney to look forward to this fall. I was flipping through issue #50, when I saw the paragraph heading "*Gargoyles* Chases Away the Ducks." I knew what it was about. At first I thought the expansion of *Gargoyles* would totally cancel *Duck Daze*, so I was slightly relieved when I learned the series was only delayed. But I'm still very upset that now I have to wait longer for *Duck Daze*.

Art: Bob Mulready



MAGNETO STROLLING THROUGH HIS NEIGHBORHOOD.

Anyway, I love Bob Miller's Animation Scene column. There's always some piece of information (such as the Disney Afternoon news, the preview of the second season of *The Critic*) that's vital for an animation fan like me. Sometimes I wonder if three pages is worth the $4.99 I pay for each issue. But you also give us a wealth of other animation articles that are very enjoyable, which also convince me the $4.99 is worth it. I loved all the *Flintstones* articles and interviews in COMICS SCENE YEARBOOK #3, and the interview with *2 Stupid Dogs* (I love that show!) creator Donovan Cook in issue #48. More, please! Even though there are other magazines devoted to animation, which I read and enjoy, I would love it if you expanded Animation Scene to another magazine.

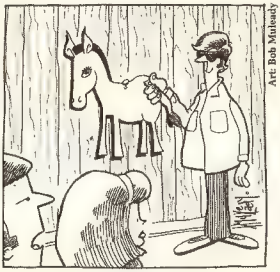
Ryan Wynns
23 Kline Road
Southwick, MA 01077

...I want to thank you for your coverage of the movie *Casper* in CS #51. To be honest, I didn't expect much when I went to see this film. Casper was never one of my favorite cartoon characters as a child. But I thought I would go anyway, check out the special FX and see if there was anything reasonable about the film.

I came away impressed, stunned and delighted. This is a wonderful family film. There are a few moments that are perhaps sillier than they need to be, and a couple of incidents that might be regarded as tasteless at worst, but *far and away* this movie is a wonderful treat. You forget that you're looking at computer-generated images. They become characters, especially Casper, who manages to be one of the most charming characters in the film. Christina Ricci deserves high praise as well for a wonderful performance with her ghostly companion.

As for set design, if this film doesn't take an Oscar for it, there's no justice. Casper's home makes the *Addams Family* mansion look like a reject from a trailer park. The imagination that went into this place was incredible. Overall, *Casper* is one of the best movie treats I've seen in a long time.

Art: Bob Mulready



"MATT MURDOCK WINS EVERY TIME!"

That's the up side of my letter. However, here's the downside: *Pocahontas*. I do *not* like the look of this film. The characters seem primitive in appearance, there's very little of the usual Disney style here to be seen and I can't say I'm impressed with the premise. There just doesn't seem to be a lot to work with.

I find it interesting that one of the creators addressed the "politically correct" question, even though I was stunned by his response. "If it is, that just means we didn't offend anybody." *Excuse me?* How about those of us who are offended by "politically correct" in the first place?

Sorry, but I think Disney has a major loser in *Pocahontas*. I should mention that some of their upcoming animation projects, for other reasons, don't exactly inspire me. *Hunchback of Notre Dame*? *Hercules*?! *Tarzan of the Apes*?! Pardon me, but this last one has been done, sometimes well, sometimes not, but more than *enough* times, I think we can all agree. Are we *that* short of good stories to tell? Granted, *any* movie would have a long way to go to match *Lion King*, but I really don't think *Pocahontas* or any of these others are going to come even *remotely* close.

I'll keep *Casper*, thank you.
Thomas Wheeler
7887 N. La Cholla #2154
Tucson, AZ 85741-4357

...I would like to thank you for your article featuring Walter Reed, titled "Serial Hero," by Tom Weaver in issue #51. I have been a regular buyer of both CS and STARLOG for 15 years and appreciate the number of articles and interviews with cast members of the 1950s television show *The Adventures of Superman*.

Since I have been a longtime follower of the show, I enjoyed reading Reed's comments about George Reeves. I'd like to thank Reed for emphasizing in your interview his disbelief in the suicide verdict placed on the case. Had the evidence surrounding the case truly shown a suicide, I would believe it, but this is not the case. Elements beyond the drunken individuals present that night clearly indicate something else happened. Shortly before the "other girl" passed away of old age (about five years ago), she strongly maintained on an evening tabloid TV show, "It was Superman that killed Reeves." Toni Mannix, who died many years after Reeves, went to her grave with a broken heart.

Reeves' first and only wife, Ellanora Reeves Rose, had written a book in collaboration with her daughter Deborah Spencer Rose on Reeves' early years and was looking for a publisher. It has been five years since I wrote to them; I wonder if maybe they're still looking for a suitable publisher.

Reed's performance in both *Superman and the Mole Men* and the 1957 episode "The Atomic Captive" will always be remembered. Thank you, Walter Reed, for sharing your experiences.

Louis F. Koza
7 Jacqueline Court
W. Babylon, NY 11704

Art: Bob Mulready

GROUCHO HARPO CHICO LOBO

Interstellar Adventure at its grittiest and most realistic!

STAR TREK

DEEP SPACE NINE™

3rd Season Subscription $25

Four issues, chronicling the third season of **DEEP SPACE NINE**, the on-going **STAR TREK** saga! Action-packed with interviews, both with stars and the behind-the-scenes creators, writers, designers and directors. Complete episode synopses, plus giant-size foldout pinups. Dozens of color photos, 68 pages!

Relive the Adventures of the First and Second Seasons in These Back Issues!

ISSUE #1
Premiere issue—Gold cover! Interviews: Co-creator Rick Berman, makeup wizard Michael Westmore, director David Carson. "Emissary" synopsis. Posters: Colm Meaney, Avery Brooks, Siddig El Fadil, the cast. $10.

ISSUE #2
Interviews: Brooks, Nana Visitor, Terry Farrell, Armin Shimerman, El Fadil. Posters: Farrell, Rene Auberjonois, Visitor, Armin Shimerman. $7

ISSUE #3
Interviews: Co-creator Michael Piller, designer Herman Zimmerman, director Paul Lynch. Synopses from "Past Prologue" to "Q-Less." $7.

ISSUE #4
All-synopsis issue, completing first season, from "Dax" to "In the Hands of the Prophets." $7

ISSUE #5
Interviews: Meaney, Auberjonois, Cirroc Lofton. Four Synopses. Posters: Visitor, Farrell, Marc Alaimo, El Fadil. $7

ISSUE #6
Ferengi Special! Interviews: Max Grodénchik, Aron Eisenberg, Alaimo. Synopses. Posters: Auberjonois, Shimerman, Wallace Shawn, Daphne Ashbrook. $7

ISSUE #7
All synopsis issue, "Rules of Acquisition" to "Paradise." Posters: Visitor, Auberjonois, El Fadil and the cast. $7

ISSUE #8
Interviews: Writer Fred Rappaport. Synopses. Posters: Meaney, Brooks, Farrell, Shimerman. *Available: July.* $7

™, ® & © 1994 Paramount Pictures. All rights reserved. STAR TREK and related marks are trademarks of Paramount Pictures. Starlog authorized user.

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

Please indicate quantity being ordered.

___**3rd Season Subscription $25**
(4 Issues. Note: Issue **#9**, your first third-season issue, will be sent to you in October 1994)

Back Issues:

___Issue **#1** $10 ___Issue **#2** $7 ___Issue **#3** $7
___Issue **#4** $7 ___Issue **#5** $7 ___Issue **#6** $7
___Issue **#7** $7 ___Issue **#8** $7

POSTAGE & HANDLING for BACK ISSUES
1st magazine: $2. Up to 5: $3. 6 or more: $5. FOREIGN: $4. per magazine. CANADA Canadian residents add 10% tax.

Send cash, check or money order to:
STARLOG PRESS
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

Method of Payment:
☐Cash ☐Check
☐Money Order
☐Discover ☐Master Card
☐Visa

_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
Account No.

Card Expiration Date:___/___ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone #: (____) ____ ____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

City State Zip

Signature

Total enclosed: $

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery

The past is glorious. The present, disturbing. And the future for comics remains grim.

By WILL MURRAY

You hear a lot of nervous talk in the comic book industry these days.

Comics are dying, people whisper. Sales are plummeting. Stores are going out of business. Distributors are failing. Publishers are more concerned with lucrative licensing deals than quality comics, and even longtime readers have contracted their contagious apathy. Too many superheroes have spoiled the four-color soup.

These reports are undeniable. But are they the root cause or merely symptoms of the *real* problem?

Looking over the bombed-out comic book landscape, I can't help but be reminded of the death of the pulp magazines in the early 1950s. In many ways, the pulps were the predecessors of the comic book. From the 1890s to 1953, pulp magazines like *Argosy*, *Adventure*, *Action Stories*, *Detective Story Magazine*, *Strange Tales*, *Black Mask*, *Weird Tales*, *The Shadow*, *Doc Savage*, *Marvel Science Stories* and *Ka-Zar* dominated the newsstands of America. The comic book industry took many of its cues—not to mention titles —from the pulps.

What killed the pulp magazine? The answer depends on who you ask.

One popular theory blamed radio dramas like *The Shadow* and *I Love a Mystery*, which ate into America's leisure time reading through the 1930s and 1940s. It was free, too.

Others accused television, which began in the late 1940s and soon captured America's attention, crushing radio drama as well as pulp magazines. Even comic books were blamed

Art: Mark Bagley/Larry Mahlstedt

Art: George Pérez

"Comics have been dying since the 1950s," says industry veteran Joe Simon.

for stealing away young readers who found four-color fantasy more captivating than cold print.

Pulp fantasy novelist L. Sprague de Camp once patiently explained to me that the paperback book, with its compact, portable size, longer shelf life and more adult content, won the hearts and minds of readers and distributors alike, effectively pushing the big, thick pulps off the racks in the mid-1950s.

But at that time, paperbacks had already been around for more than a decade. Why did they take so long to roll over the pulp magazine?

I once asked John L. Nanovic, the editor who guided such pulp success stories as *The Shadow*, *Doc Savage*, *The Avenger* and many other proto-superheroes. His answer shocked me.

Pulps, he said, were already dying when he joined the Street & Smith editorial staff back in 1931.

The Depression, Nanovic pointed out, was the beginning of the end. Overnight, major pulp chains went out of business. Magazines that had routinely sold a million copies a week (yes, a week) lost tremendous circulation. Payment rates to contributors were slashed. Even though pulp magazines continued to be published for another 20 years, sales never rebounded to pre-Depression levels. After that, it was a succession of wounds, akin to the death of a thousand cuts. Radio drama took off during the 1930s. Then came the comic book, which diverted the dimes of the youngest readers to new upstart publishers. While the pulp industry reeled from that, World War II came along. Suddenly, the talent pool of editors, writers and artists were draft bait. The publishers hired whomever they could, sometimes to the detriment of quality. In 1943, the U.S. government began rationing pulp paper. Overnight, huge numbers of healthy pulp titles were cancelled. Comics, which used half the paper allotment and cost the same thin dime, had a better chance for survival. Some publishers killed their pulps to keep their comics going, among them Timely's Martin Goodman.

By the time television took America by storm, the war for dimes and readers was all but lost.

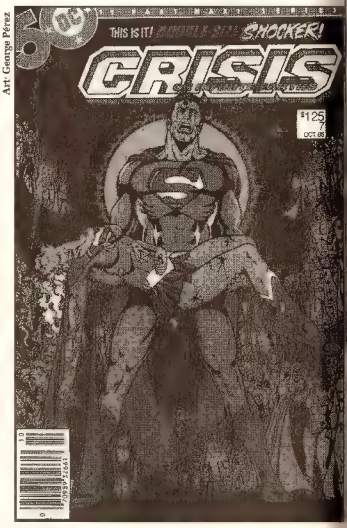
People like to say that the pulp magazine was the first casualty in TV's relentless assault upon literacy. But that's not true. At the same time pulps were dropping dead, the paperback book was taking off. So what was *really* going on?

Art: Evan Dorkin/Marie Severin

The pulps were a thriving, profitable medium inspiring the imaginations of millions, and then they died a sudden, untimely death.

Well, it was a social revolution as much as a commercial shift. The battle was for domination of America's leisure time. You see, the pulps sold two things: Heroes and short stories. TV offered the electronic equivalent of both. Unlike pulps and radio, you did not have to use your imagination. Perhaps most importantly, television was a shared activity. Family and friends could gather around the flickering tube and experience the story together, chatting between commercials.

It was very social. Unlike reading, which required at minimum, silence, and at maximum, solitude.



Superheroes have died and then returned from beyond the pale with regularity since their invention. Can the industry do the same?

On the other hand, 1950s TV was very primitive. It offered half-hour short stories like *Dragnet* and *I Love Lucy*. Other than old movies, there was no TV equivalent to the novel. If you wanted to read something more meaty and sophisticated, you read a novel.

While the TV revolution was underway, the paperback revolution was just beginning. Prior to 1950, paperbacks were almost exclusively reprint vehicles. Cheap editions of hardcover bestsellers, classics and even pulp reprints dominated. Then came Fawcett—whose comic book line was in decline —and their Gold Medal

Spider-Man & Related Characters. Trademark & Copyright 1982, 1989, 1990, 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group

book program. They published original novels and only original novels by writers like John D. McDonald and others about to become famous. Soon, they were selling millions of copies.

Distributors—in their way as powerful as readers—loved paperback books because they could fit more product onto the crowded racks. And paperbacks had a much longer sales window. Readers loved them because they looked neither cheap nor juvenile. The oversized monthly pulp became a dinosaur. There was no saving it.

Pulps weren't the only casualty of the 1950s, either. The big slick magazines like *Colliers'* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, which enjoyed the same million-copy circulations 1920s pulps had, began to dry up too. Why? Well, they were also in the short story business. America was no longer interested in short stories. It had TV. Today, more than 40 years later, the short story remains a commercial dinosaur.

But people didn't stop reading, as some claim. America just changed its reading habits.

What does this have to do with comics? A great deal.

Comics also saw their first sales rollback in the late '40s, about the time TV first insinuated itself into American popular culture. By 1954, the rollback was a rout. Yet, comic books ultimately survived. In many respects, they improved. The glory days of the Silver Age were yet to come. At least, that's the conventional wisdom.

Recently, I was talking to the legendary Joe Simon about the current state of the industry and he said flatly, "Comics have been dying since the 1950s."

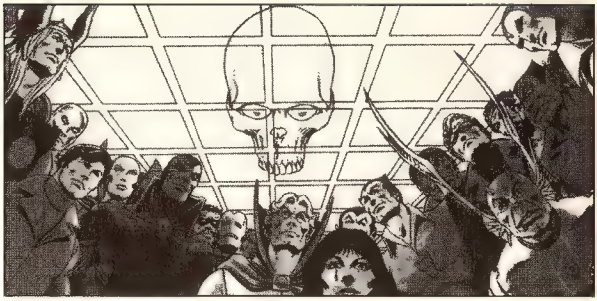
I was shocked by his offhand remark, as I had been years earlier by John Nanovic's tough-minded dismissal of the 1930s pulps I loved. Hadn't the glory days of Marvel Comics been in the '60s? And wasn't the rise of the direct market, with its increased creative freedom, basically a 1980s phenomenon?

All true. But that's the fan/reader perspective. From the publishing perspective, comic books have *never* rebounded from the sales highs of the 1940s, when *Superman*, *Captain Marvel*, *Captain America* and even *Mutt and Jeff* routinely sold a million copies a month.

From the viewpoint of a Joe Simon, comics sales have been downtrending since about 1949. Steadily, inexorably, decade after decade. The recent wild multi-million-copy sales highs of *X-Men* #1 and *Spider-Man* #1 are statistically meaningless. Many of those copies were bagged, boxed and never read. When *Superman* sold a million copies, it was assumed every copy was read by at least three people—resulting in a practical readership of three million. If you lost a reader, one of the pass-alongs more than likely took his place.

Those days are gone forever, it seems. When a comic book is sold today, there is no assumption of pass-along readership. In fact, there's no guarantee every sold copy is even *read*.

Will comics rise from the current industry slump like some long-forgotten character suddenly revamped and made relevant again?



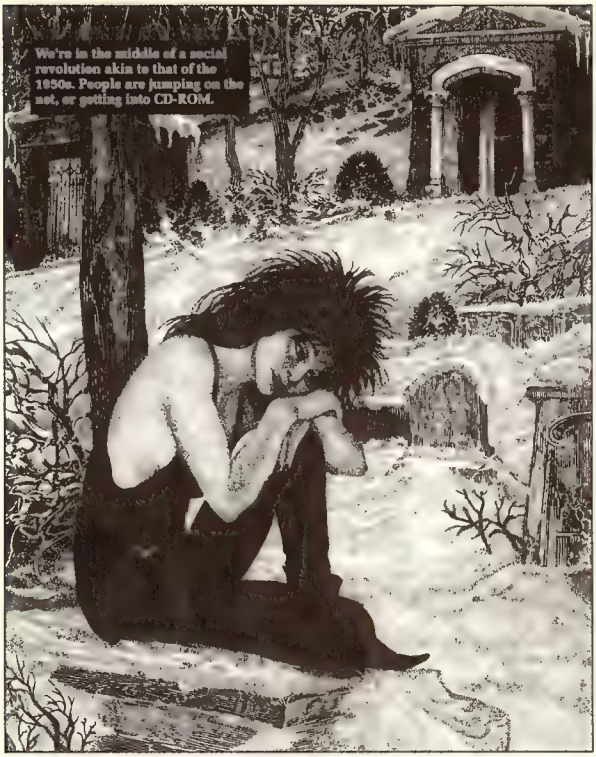
Art: Jim Starlin

The trusty genres are *not* selling like they used to. Their audience is fleeing the format, not any particular genre.

This is the stuff of crisis. And it has been going on for more than 40 years—twice as long as it took for the pulp magazines to give up the ghost. But there's no denying it: sales-wise, comics have been on life support for a long time.

Art: Evan Dorkin/Marie Severin

Comics sales have been downtrending since about 1949—steadily, inexorably, decade after decade.



It's no secret that the comics industry was close to going belly up in the 1950s. The superhero boom went bust. So did the funny animal book and the horror boom that followed. There were Senate hearings. Censorship took its toll. The novelty of comics had worn off.

Undoubtedly, TV had its effect. After all, it was free. But if you look it up, you'll discover that for the year 1953—the same year that the last pulp magazine chain finally collapsed—more comic book titles were published than at any time before. Twelve months later, the industry was on its knees.

What happened?

Everything. All at once. The publishers, used to booming sales, compensated for declining profits by flooding the racks with more and more titles, making up in volume what individual circulation could no longer deliver. The glutted, oversaturated market collapsed.

Similarly, there were distribution troubles. The worst took place in 1957, when American News went bankrupt. They took many comic companies with them. Martin Goodman's Atlas Distribution also failed. Atlas Comics stopped publishing for two solid months and limped along for a year before they rebuilt their string of titles.

In that year, the future Marvel Comics hung by a fraying thread. If you asked Martin Goodman his view of the future of comics in that doomful year, his answer was a no-nonsense "It's a dying industry."

Goodman found his salvation in his rival, DC-National Comics, who agreed to distribute his books. He found his future in Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, who refused to surrender their careers and their futures to conventional wisdom, and pulled Marvel out of its death spiral through sheer creativity.

And DC? Their superheroes were coming back after a very dark period, thanks to Julie Schwartz's editorial acumen, which gave the readers new versions of The Flash, Green Lantern and other characters considered dead only a few years before. *Superman* still sold, largely because of the George Reeves TV show. But *Batman* was in decline, as was *Wonder Woman*.

In fact, by 1963, *Batman* sales were so poor that the Dark Knight's family of titles was on the verge of cancellation. The New Look created by Schwartz and Carmine Infantino, followed by the Adam West *Batman* TV show, reversed its declining fortunes. Wonder Woman received a much-needed boost in the 1970s thanks to TV and feminist interest in her.

Think about it: Marvel nearly folded forever in 1957. Batman—one of the most popular and merchandised characters on the planet—was slated for cancellation in 1963. In truth, DC has been largely kept alive in the last 40 years by periodic transfusions from film and TV license deals. Both companies only survived by drastic retooling of once-popular characters and formats. Each experienced implosions along the way, of which the most recent may be the most dramatic.

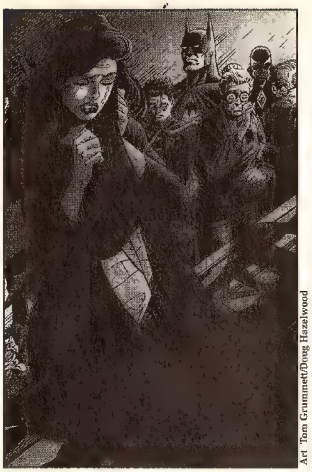
The drum roll of publishers not so fortunate is long. EC. Quality. Fawcett. Fiction House. Dell. Tower. ACG. Gold Key. Atlas. Charlton. Pacific. First. Renegade. Defiant. And it's not over.

Today, we have a situation paralleling 1954. Declining readership. Distribution problems. The aftermath of a boom that has turned into a bust. Reader disinterest in the superhero. And spiraling prices caused by a paper shortage. The Five Horsemen of the Comic Book Apocalypse.

But there's a sixth horseman.

It's called the electronic media. It has been quietly eating away at comics for a few years now. And not just comics that are at risk. The paperback book is in trouble these days. Bestsellers sell better than ever but the traditional genres are in decline—mysteries, horror, Westerns, science fiction and adventure. While bookstores are doing OK, the independent magazine distributors who first kicked off the paperback revolution by racking them next to magazines are close to throwing in the towel. Just as they gave up on comic books back in the 1970s. Publishers are at a loss to reverse this trend.

Science fiction and horror have been especially hard-hit. I visited the MIT Science Fiction Library not long ago. It houses one of the largest SF book and magazine collections in the universe. In past times, undergraduates could be found sprawled in its oversized chairs, reading everything from *The Lord of the Rings* to a 1953



Superman, Batman & Related Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1994, 1995 DC Comics

Art: Tom Grummett/Doug Hazlewood

Is the death of comics mirrored in the publicity stunt deaths of major comics characters? Some say yes.

issue of *Planet Stories*. That evening it was practically deserted. Where is everyone? I wondered.

The answer was chilling: Upstairs in the Computer Center. On the net. As usual.

SF readers have jumped online, chatting, playing video games or just lurking. One thing they're *not* doing is reading.

The erosion of book readers seems to have started around 1990. There were other factors, of course. Spiraling costs, reader apathy, etc. Prior to that time, in response to a growing market, book publishers flooded the ranks with product. Stephen King was big, so horror titles abounded.

The trouble with any boom is that the more stuff you publish, the lower average quality drops. During the horror boom, more junk was published than good books. Writers who were not yet ready for the big time enjoyed lucrative careers. When the market collapsed, so did their "careers."

For readers, the consequences were stark. The more books you bought, the more likely you were to pick up a dud. Pick up enough duds and the customer can be forgiven for concluding that the quality of books has dropped or that his tastes have changed. So he looks elsewhere for his entertainment and bust goes the boom.

Sound familiar? Comics are coming off a similar boom. Like paperbacks, they're finding it hard to shift to another genre, as they have in the past. It used to be that if the public got tired of horror, the publishers switched to Westerns, or mysteries or SF. This was as true for comics as paperback publishers. And as true for pulp publishers before pulps fell out of favor.

No more. The trusty genres are *not* selling like they used to. While publishers wrack their brains seeking the next hot trend, their audience is fleeing the format, not any particular genre. This is true in paperbacks, and especially for the notoriously fickle comic market.

I believe we're in the middle of another social revolution akin to that of the 1950s. People are jumping on the net, or getting into CD-ROM. And playing card games like *Magic: The Gathering*. (Ask comic shop owners across the country, and most will tell you *Magic: The Gathering* has kept them afloat during this last difficult year.)

What do those activities have in common?

All are intensely social activities. And they're not yoked to genres, as print entertainment media are. That's a strong contrast to the essentially solitary activity of reading. Just like TV was when it was new.

It's the birth of the TV monster all over again. By itself, it would be a significant problem. Add the Five Horsemen and you have a crisis.

Comic books started as a novelty. No one thought they would last. But they have. Now there's a new, more compelling novelty. And it's growing ferociously. In the last year alone, an estimated three million subscribers have signed onto various online services. That's eight million subscribers, up from five. And the numbers are snowballing.

It's not just a simple matter of boredom, escalating prices and those other

Art: Mike Zeck/Bob McLeod

A zillion people would no doubt go to the mythic James Cameron *Spider-Man* movie, but how many really read the comic book?

dread Horsemen. The electronic media provide the people who used to read comics with many more hours of personal contact than do comic books, as well as the kind of interaction that cold print—four-color or otherwise—can *never* hope to achieve in its present form.

It has gotten so grim that in the recent COMICS SCENE poll on the future of comics (in issue #50), many industry giants flatly predicted the end of the comic book as we know it, and suggested the medium would have to go electronic to survive.

Frankly, that sounds like surrender to me. Back in the 1950s, many white flags went up. But it was the guys who stayed in the four-color trenches who saved the day—and the industry.

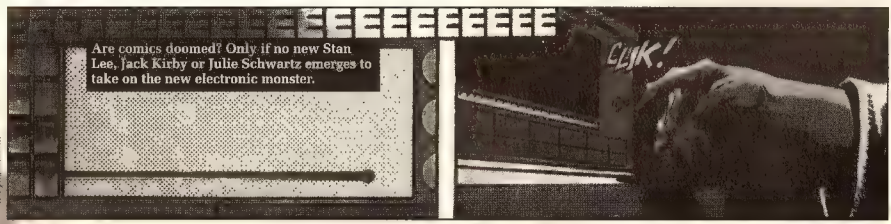
Are comics dying? Without a doubt.

Are they doomed?

Only if no new Stan Lee, Jack Kirby or Julie Schwartz emerges to take on the new electronic monster.

Or, as Joe Simon put it to me, "Comics have been dying since the 1950s. But, nobody's found a way to kill them yet."

CS


EEEEEEEEEEE
Are comics doomed? Only if no new Stan Lee, Jack Kirby or Julie Schwartz emerges to take on the new electronic monster.
CLIK!

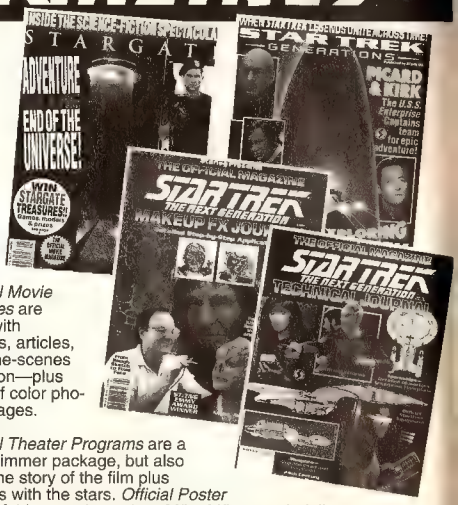
Art: Ric Stardin

Design & Layout: Evan Metcalf

MOVIE MAGAZINES

LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES!

WHO WILL SURVIVE THE DUELS TO THE DEATH???
STREET FIGHTER
Jean-Claude Van Damme leads the Street Fighters against an empire of evil!
The most exciting, mind-bending, adult-oriented, hard-hitting action movie ever!
See you're looking at Video Store heroes in the flesh!
BONUS POSTER
FREE! WIN A $5,000 SHADOW PINBALL MACHINE!
The Shadow
THE OFFICIAL MOVIE MAGAZINE
Who Knows What Evil LURKS in the HEARTS of MEN?
The Shadow Knows!
DINOSAUR
DEMON KNIGHT
SPECIAL PREVIEW!
Exclusive preview of new HBO movie! Plus: 32 gruesome story photos!



Official Movie Magazines are packed with interviews, articles, behind-the-scenes information—plus dozens of color photos! 64 pages.

Official Theater Programs are a slightly slimmer package, but also contain the story of the film plus interviews with the stars. *Official Poster Books* unfolds to make a giant 22" x 33" poster in full color. On the reverse side are articles, biographies and additional color photos.

Each issue is a Collector's Treasure!

LET'S GO TO THE MOVIES!
MOVIE MAGAZINES

Please indicate quantity of each being ordered

___*Conan the Destroyer* Poster Magazine $3
___*Dinosaur* $6.95
___*Dinosaur* Special 3-D Cover $9.95
___*Dracula* $4.95
___*Frankenstein* $5.95
___*Freddy's Dead. The Final Nightmare* $4.95
___*Inside the Mafia (Godfather III)* $3.95
___*Jason Goes to Hell: The Final Friday* $4.95
___*Living Daylights* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Masters of the Universe* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Nightmare on Elm St. 5: Dream Child* $3.95
___*Octopussy* $3.50
___*Over The Top* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Rambo III* Poster Magazine $3.75
___*Rambo III* Theater Program $2
___*Rambo III* $3
___*Rocky III* $2
___*Rocky IV* $3.95
___*Rocky IV* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Rocky IV* Magazine plus Posters $4.95
___*Spaceballs* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Star Trek Technical Journal* $6.95
___*Star Trek Makeup FX Journal* $6.95
___*Star Trek II: Wrath of Khan* $3.50
___*Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home* $5.95
___*Star Trek V: The Final Frontier* $4.95
___*Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* $4.95
___*Star Trek: Generations* $6.95
___*Star Trek: Generations* Special 3-D Cover $9.95
___*Stargate* $4.95
___*Streetfighter* $4.95
___*Superman IV: Quest for Peace* Poster Magazine $3.50
___*Tales from the Crypt: Demon Knight* $4.95
___*Terminator 2: Judgment Day* $4.95
___*The Shadow* $4.95
___*The Untouchables* $3.95
___*Wes Craven's New Nightmare* $4.95

POSTAGE & HANDLING: One magazine· Add $2. Up to five: Add $3. Six or more: $5.
FOREIGN: $4 per magazine

Total enclosed: $___
Method of Payment:
☐Cash ☐Check
☐Money Order
☐Discover ☐Master Card ☐Visa

Send cash, check o rmoney order to.
STARLOG GROUP, Inc.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
Account No.
Card Expiration Date: __/__ (Mo./Yr.)
Your Daytime Phone #: (___) _____
Print Name As It Appears On Your Card
Street
City State Zip
Your Signature

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS
Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery

DOUBLE TROUBLE

As Two-Face, Tommy Lee Jones is literally beside himself with anger.

By WILL MURRAY

Tommy Lee Jones looks uneasy. He all but admits it. "I'm *not* particularly comfortable with the question—or this subject. What have I done to motivate such a question on this day? I mean, I don't *get* it."

Probably any actor would squirm a little surrounded by the microphones and intent faces of a dozen or more journalists from all over the world. But there's more to it than that. There's another presence in the room, unseen but very much felt. At first, no one wants to speak its name, although it will be mentioned later. For now, everyone wants to talk about Jones' participation in *Batman Forever*, and someone has asked him why he seems so ill-at-ease with the press.

"Why are the Batman villains so sought after?" Jones says, echoing a more acceptable question. "Well, they're just a lot of fun. You really don't have to worry about going over the top. That's where you're *supposed* to be. That's a lot of fun. It's liberating. And also, these movies have large audiences. That's appealing.

"Sometimes you feel like doing an art film that's apparently unconcerned with the size of its audience. Why? Because it represents variety. And on the other end of the spectrum is *this* movie, which is intended to be seen by many people. And that's a different aspect of one's work as a performer. The character is pretty simple. He comes from a comic book, after all. That was appealing after some of the things I've been doing. Also, the magnitude of this movie was appealing as well. *Batman Forever* was an important movie for an important movie company. The challenge is to make the movie that you're *supposed* to make. Cartoons are appealing, just as novels are."

Jones' version of Two-Face is the first cinematic take on the character, who was deemed too dark and difficult to bring to life on the now-classic *Batman* TV show. In that sense, Jones has more freedom to interpret the character, who until now was relegated to comic books and the animated series (voiced by Richard Moll). So, it's not surprising that Jones' Two-Face—called Harvey Two-Face—is considerably more over the top than the scarred and tortured former District Attorney Harvey Dent that Batman fans have known since the 1940s, and who was played by Billy Dee Williams in 1989's *Batman*.

"Be hard to take ol' Harvey too far over the top," Jones drawls. "I mean, that's where he *starts*. Over the top—I don't really know what it *means*. I think that's what the job *was*. It's my understanding that's what Harvey was all about."

Asked which side of his character most draws him, Jones is visibly amused. "I don't know," he chuckles. "I kinda like both sides of Harvey."

On the subject of the weird split-face makeup, Jones is much more open. "Rick Baker designed it and put it on the first time or two," Jones reveals, "and then left it with some technicians and me. We streamlined the process, so ultimately it only took a couple of hours. At first, it took *four* hours. It seemed like *years*. But we got better and quicker as time went on and it took less.

"Rick Baker is one of the very best

Former D.A. Harvey Dent (Tommy Lee Jones) looks perfectly normal. But there are two sides to every story.

[makeup artists] in the world," he adds, "and a good friend. One of the nicest things about doing this movie was getting to know Rick and working with him. He designed the makeup to be as painless as possible."

Someone asks an ill-thought-out question about the actual necessity of resorting to makeup to realize the character's evil side, and the actor cuts him off. "So why use the latex?" Jones laughs. "So why not use the latex to create a human being and let *me* play the twisted part?"

Moving on, Jones admits, "Yeah, it's difficult to have half your head concealed by a cover of any kind, whether it be rag or an inch of latex. The side of your face that's under latex is unusable for eating or any other purpose. It was easier for me than it was for Val Kilmer, because he had his entire *head* inside that piece of vinyl. And it wouldn't allow him to move his neck. Batman can only move his shoulders if he wants to look around."

On the subject of researching the role, Jones' warm side resurfaces. "I talked to Bob Kane, who had created the character," he reveals. "I really enjoyed his company. He's a fascinating man. He visited [the set] several times. He even drew a picture for me and signed it. It's on my wall at home."

Two-Face being one of Kane's earliest Batman villains, the question naturally arises—is Two-Face really dead and what did his creator think of his unceremonious demise?

"We didn't discuss Harvey's demise," Jones says flatly, "we discussed his creation. I don't know. Maybe he has been killed. Maybe he comes back. We don't know." Jones grunts out a humorless laugh. "He took *quite* a fall."

Another character who took a fall—although one of a completely different kind—was Jones' interpretation of baseball legend Ty Cobb in the box-office flop *Cobb*. "I was disappointed that the movie didn't reach a very big audience," he admits. "Of course I was. I don't want to second guess the movie. My job was to play Ty Cobb, which I did as well as I could. Why didn't the audience go to see it? I don't know. Blame me. I can handle it. Maybe it's *my* fault. I certainly wished it well and I *continue* to wish it well. Maybe people will discover it on video."

Jones has just signed to play one of

And the other side of Dent is forever scarred, unleashing the maniacal fury of his alter-ego, Two-Face.

Jones will return to the comics scene as one of *The Men in Black*, a movie based on the Malibu comic.

the leads in *The Men in Black*, a UFO thriller directed by Barry (*The Addams Family*) Sonnenfeld and based on the comic book *Men in Black* from Malibu. Does this mean he's becoming more open to roles in the SF genre?

"Actually, I go from movie to movie just like going from day to day," Jones replies. "I don't even apply the term genre to movies. I think it's a literary term."

But he's not completely dismissive of the field, as it turns out. When asked, Jones makes a surprising admission. "Oh, yeah, I had a *lot* of comic books. *Superman* and *Batman* and even some of the stranger ones, like Elastic Man. I had some Elastic Man comics. You know, the guy who could stretch like a mile? I *loved* him."

The subject of Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's attack on Hollywood comes up. "I was *afraid* you would ask me something about that," Jones says ruefully. "I wonder if he means because of all the stabbings in the urban centers, Ralph Fiennes

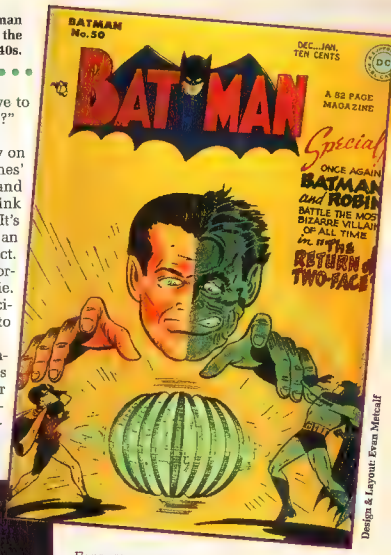
should really think twice about doing *Hamlet* because of the violence. Is that the issue? And if Ralph should think twice about it, who's going to tell him *not* to? And who's going to keep him *from* it? And how do we decide when it's OK to do *Hamlet* and when it *isn't*? If it's OK to do *Hamlet* and leave the stabbings in if it's a good production—but *not* if it's a bad one? And what bureau and what power of enforcement will they have to decide which is good and which *isn't*? Or is that the province of the government at all? Or is it any of Bob Dole's business? Those are good questions. Some politicians are tempted to ask themselves the question: 'Just how much of fascism *can* I use? I don't want the whole thing. Maybe we'll just put them out of work. We don't *have* to kill them.' This is an ongoing debate. I don't care to join it."

Jones is quick to leap to the defense of *Batman Forever*'s brand of comic-book action. "Batman's *not* violent," he insists. "I don't think Batman's violent. I just don't. I mean, are we to understand that *that's* violence?"

As one of Bob Kane's earliest Batman villains, Two-Face has haunted the Dark Knight since the 1940s.

Asked if he prefers to rely on instinct or intellect, Jones' response is quick and sharp. "Intellect. I don't think instinct is valuable to an actor. It's a term that's misapplied to an actor. Birds fly south by instinct. I believe in designing a performance and in designing a movie. I don't believe in happy accidents. I think spontaneity has to be very carefully planned."

Then, as if invoked by incantation, the ghost in the room is given a name—Jim Carrey. For months, rumors of a fierce competition between the two powerful actors has swirled around the production of *Batman Forever*.



Design & Layout: Evan Metcalf

"We had never worked together before," Jones states. "I met Jim for the first time on this movie and had a great time. I really enjoyed it. Rehearsals were hard, because the sets were so big and unwieldy and difficult to light. So, we basically shot when the set was ready. And it was hard to plan exactly where you were going to stand or what you were going to say or how you were going to say it—the things that conventionally come out of rehearsal. That was difficult simply because of the size of the endeavor. But that presented no problem for a professional like Jim."

It's a polite and reasonable reply. But it doesn't quite address the rumors of a scene-stealing competition in which many feel Jones' Two-Face came out second best to Carrey's Riddler.

"Well, if I can kindly do so, I would like to *resist* that question," Jones says with a politeness that doesn't quite mask the glittering edge creeping into his voice. "To answer it acknowledges the implicit *label* of scene-stealer. Which is *not* what Jim is and it's *not* what I am. He's a good actor and he tries his best in every frame of film, and so do I.

"There's a dishonorable connota-

"I kinda like both sides of Harvey," Jones says. Sugar (Drew Barrymore) and Spice (Debi Mazar) have their own preferences.

"Be hard to take of Harvey too far over the top," notes Jones, attacking the big-top. "That's where he *starts*."

All Batman Forever Photos: Courtesy Warner Bros.

tion attached to the term scene-stealer," Jones continues. "It indicates someone who isn't part of a company endeavor. Jim's very *much* a team player and I am too, I submit. So if I could revise the question and leave that term out, I would say we didn't have any problem at all. There were difficulties presented, as I said, largely by the unwieldiness of some of the set pieces, but we're professionals and it's our job to solve those problems."

Does he agree with the recurrent complaint that the Batman films are overloaded with characters—especially villains? "I don't know," Jones says carefully. "I suppose that's for the audience and the critics to decide. It's certainly not for *me* to decide. In the comic books, the tragedy—the pathos—of Harvey's story is important. I think it would have been nice if we had more time—or room—to explore the subtleties in Harvey's predicament. But the movie's not called *Two-Face Forever*. It's *Batman Forever*."

Jones resists any comparison between his own persona and that of Two-Face. "No, I don't think of myself as having two sides. Duality is an obvious theme in this movie. As far as duality in the human character, *Batman Forever* has a very firm grasp of the *obvious*. Which is all that you can expect. This movie is *not* about psychoanalysis. It's *not* about schizophrenia. It's about having a good time—seeing a huge comic book unfold before you in a new way.

"I guess you know me from what you see on the movie screen," Tommy Lee Jones concludes. "But I don't know *myself* from what I see on the movie screen. That's my job. My friends and family don't live with the characters that I play, and they don't mistake them for me. So, the idea of duality doesn't exist, because one is reality and one is *not*. Most of the people in my life—myself included—*know* the difference. I'm this fantasy creature on the movie screen, but I'm *not* like the actor who played the role of the Lone Ranger, who played that role and that role *only*."

In *Batman Forever*, Jones shared the screen with Jim Carrey's Riddler. Both actors, he says, are team players.

Selected Photos: Ralph Nelson

All Batman Photos & Art: Trademark & Copyright 1995 DC Comics

SHARE THE VOYAGE!

EXPERIENCE THE EXCITEMENT!

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

ENJOY THE CHALLENGE!

STARLOG

THE SCIENCE FICTION UNIVERSE®

Each exciting issue of STARLOG carries you into the challenging science fiction universe. Subscribe today and share the voyage. Enjoy the incredible convenience of having STARLOG delivered to your home—and SAVE MONEY!!

New and improved coverage explores the latest news, covers movie and TV previews, reveals special FX secrets and presents colorful photographs and exciting interviews with actors, writers & directors.

ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION

If you act today and order a one year subscription—that's twelve issues—you will also receive a **FREE COLLECTIBLE *STARLOG* BACK ISSUE!** You pay only $39.97, save $19.43 off the newsstand price—AND receive that STARLOG COLLECTIBLE ISSUE absolutely FREE! It's a terrific opportunity!

SPECIAL 6-MONTH SUBSCRIPTION

For a limited time only, STARLOG is offering a special 6-month subscription rate. Order today and receive the next 6 issues of STARLOG—that's one a month. You pay only $19.99—and save $9.71 off the newsstand price.

STARLOG SUBSCRIPTIONS MAKE GREAT GIFTS!

STARLOG Subscriptions

Mark the Subscription Offer that is right for you.

___ ONE YEAR (USA) $39.97
___ ONE YEAR (Foreign) $48.97 (US funds only)
___ When ordering a One-Year Subscription, check here and receive your Free Collectible Back Issue.

___ 6-ISSUE (USA) $19.99
___ 6-ISSUE (FOREIGN) $25.99 (US funds only)

Send cash, check or money order to:
STARLOG COMM INT'L, INC.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

Method of Payment:
❑ Cash ❑ Check ❑Money Order
❑Discover ❑Master Card ❑Visa

Account No.

Card Expiration Date: ___/___ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone #: (____)_____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

City State Zip

Signature

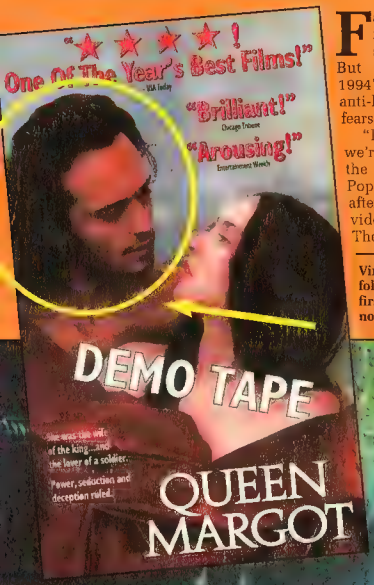
Total enclosed: $_____

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

Revenge Flies Again

The makers of The Crow: City of Angels *explain what lies in store for the spirit of vengeance.*

By MARC SHAPIRO



Fans are hoping for the best in regard to the recently announced sequel *The Crow: City of Angels*. But the anticipated follow-up to 1994's adaptation of the James O'Barr anti-hero is also resulting in some real fears bubbling to the surface.

"I think everyone's afraid that we're going to make a Xerox copy of the first film," says director Tim Pope, who's making his film debut after spending years helming music videos by the likes of Iggy Pop and The Cure. "But I can assure people that will *not* be the case at all."

"People are also afraid that we're going to do the Charles Bronson/*Death Wish* version of *The Crow*," adds screenwriter David S Goyer, who's also giving the comic to film makeover to Ghost Rider, Doctor Strange and Nick Fury (CS#49). "I think people are going to be surprised, because this will be, first and foremost, a tragic love story."

Pope and Goyer are on hand to discuss the subject at the 1995 San Diego Comic Con, but when it comes to the *Crow* sequel, little detail is forthcoming. They reveal that the storyline will involve a new incarnation of The Crow in Ash (replacing the late Brandon

Vincent Perez is set to star in the follow-up to *The Crow*. "This will be, first and foremost, a tragic love story," notes screenwriter David Goyer.

Like the reborn spirit of revenge depicted in the movie, *The Crow* will be reborn as a franchise, despite the tragic death of Brandon Lee.

Photo, Copyright 1994 Miramax

Lee's Eric Draven), played by French actor Vincent Perez. They also note that the film's action will take place in Los Angeles during the four-day Mexican celebration, The Day of the Dead. O'Barr, *The Crow*'s creator, has been contacted about participating in this sequel but hasn't yet decided what he'll do. Beyond those facts, details are primarily replaced by goals, images and non-focused challenges.

Goyer, who reports that he knocked out the first draft of *The Crow: City of Angels* during December '94, claims that he saw writing the sequel as a "totally insane challenge."

"I didn't want to think too much about what I was doing in the beginning, because there was this incredible onus on me because I was doing this," he concedes. "I just wrote 12-14 hours a day. It was like an act of purification for me to write this script."

Goyer's big challenge was, "How do I follow the first one up?" His answer was to "do something the same and, at the same time, something different.

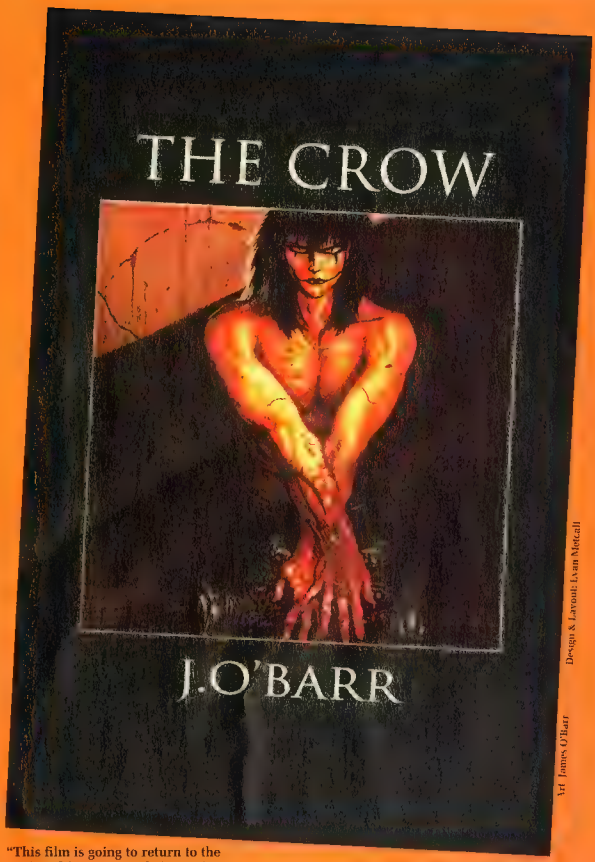
"I consider *City of Angels* just another chapter in a much bigger saga. I'm attempting to open up the *Crow* mythology. The primary thing we're trying to do with this movie is to establish the fact that since the beginning of time, there have *always* been people who have been brought back from the dead—Eric Draven was one, and so is Ash. The first *Crow* had a kind of Miltonesque sensibility to it. This one will definitely be more Orpheus and Oedipus."

Pope—who defiantly claims "This will *not* be *The Crow 2*"—offers that *City of Angels* will be using the first film as "a springboard."

"This film is going to return to the purity of O'Barr's work. It will be going further toward the purity than away from it. What we're attempting to do is to build real contrast into the film and the character of Ash. The main thing I want to explore with this film is the paradox of this character. Here we have someone who gets up in the morning, goes out and kills a few people and then goes back to sleep. I wouldn't want that job, but Ash has no choice—he must deal with a sort of parallel internal struggle.

"The violence in this film will be, in places, more extreme than in the first one, but there will also be more of an understanding of why he's prone to such violence. We're taking great pains to show the other side of the Crow."

According to Pope, many of the religious themes running through the original *Crow* will also manifest themselves in *City of Angels*. But it will be religious symbolism that's literally built into the landscape.



"This film is going to return to the purity of O'Barr's work," promises producer Tim Pope.

"We've spent a lot of time designing our city of Los Angeles," explains the director. "The city has a definite allegorical feel to it. This is *not* going to be the LA you saw in *Beverly Hills Cop III*. We've created this city with the idea that Los Angeles is literally the end of the world. It's a city that's surrounded by a river that has bridges going over it into the city. It's like our river Styx, and the bridges are between life and death. Water is going to be a big metaphor in the film. We're heavy into the idea that what's below the surface is only reflecting what's above it."

But ultimately, Tim Pope is aware that the biggest challenge he faces in bringing a second *Crow* successfully to the screen is to make an effective transition from Brandon Lee to Vincent Perez.

"When we first started seeing actors, we saw many who were just doing 'Brandon Lee.' But we knew from the beginning that we wanted something *different*. Vincent will be a reawakening of the Crow. He has a different background than Brandon did, and I think that really bodes well for this film. Everyone was very clear from the beginning that we didn't want to defile Brandon's memory with *City of Angels*. But, on the other hand, we just had to go in and do something new."

"This character is *not* Eric Draven," David Goyer concludes. "The mantle of the Crow has been passed on."

IMPROVED SELF-IMAGE

All Art: Courtesy Extreme Studios

With Glory and Avengelyne in his corner, Rob Liefeld plans to lead Image Comics, Extreme Studios and Maximum Press into a new era.

Art: By & Copyright 1995 Rob Liefeld

Promising new extremes in quality, Rob Liefeld offers a few thoughts on the comics scene.

By KIM HOWARD JOHNSON

Rob Liefeld is having the time of his life, with new excitement for Extreme Studios, a new imprint, and maybe even a movie or two. After unprecedented success in the early '90s, and a sudden cutback in the last few years, the Image Comics co-founder says his Extreme titles are back on track.

The future of Extreme is coming with the multi-part "Extreme 3000" crossover series kicking off in *Team Youngblood* #21 and the *Extreme 3000 Prelude*, before shifting into high gear later this fall. Those books set up a world in the year 3000, where the western hemisphere is policed by the fearsome Youngblood and challenged by the secret society of Newmen, with the secret of Prophet and the children of Supreme also playing key roles. In addition, the Badrock of the year 3000 pays a visit to today's Youngblood team to pass on a warning.

"Everything we're doing right now is the result of my decision to do some new stuff," says Liefeld. "In today's marketplace, with five dozen team books out there, I decided *this* was what I wanted to do to set us apart. *Extreme 3000* was something we were going to do last January—it was actually an offshoot of *Extreme Sacrifice*—until the *X-Men* 'Age of Apocalypse' was announced. We're giving people a taste of *Extreme 3000* in August, and will roll it out fully in January or February 1996."

Image Comics and Extreme Studios have survived the comics boom and subsequent bust, which many critics

Art: Rob Liefeld

Even though Liefeld concentrates on running the various sectors of Extreme, he still takes the time to pencil a book here and there, like *Badrock*.

tried to blame on Image due to late titles. According to Liefeld, Extreme has been able to plan long-range to avoid shipping books late, a charge leveled against nearly every Image title when the company was establishing itself.

"Unfortunately, not every artist can meet his deadlines, but the industry as a whole suffers from that, not just Image," he says. "Many people will malign you for shipping late, but about a year-and-a-half ago, I shipped a lot of books to make sure they were on time, and they were substandard, put out just to make a deadline. Certainly, we would like all of our books to ship on time, but given the decision, I would rather give somebody something that's really going to be worth their money. Obviously, I get punished for it—I take the returns. We're trying to put out as many books as we can on time, but when people bring up the lateness, I tell them I used to ship books on time that sucked, and they didn't sell. But if I ship something late and it's quality, it sells. It may be returnable, but it does not matter if there are none *left* to return. We're planning ahead to avoid any lateness, but when you use as much new talent as we do, they make their mistakes."

Extreme will be publishing zero issues of three titles that deserve more attention. "Summer is a good time to put out exciting product, and zero issues draw extra attention to books," Liefeld says. "With *Glory* #0, *Supreme* #0 and *Knightmare* #0, we wanted to draw attention to all three characters. There were a number of books we hadn't done zero issues for yet, and we didn't want to throw a bunch of useless zeroes in there. We decided on ones that would help build awareness of these characters, seeing as how the marketplace is as competitive as I've ever seen it. We have big plans for *Glory*, *Supreme* and *Knightmare* this next year or two, and those plans start with these issues—they're good jumping-on points. In this marketplace, you *need* to give people reasons to keep coming back or give it a second look."

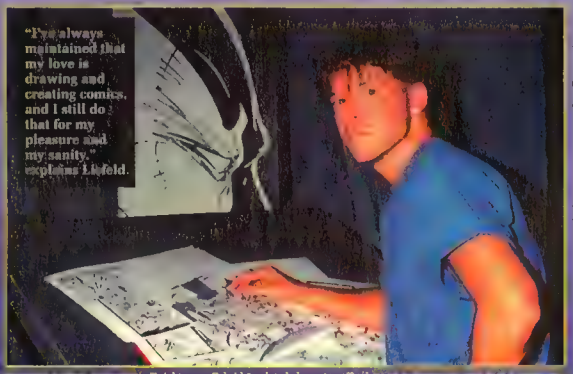
Gary Carlson and Joe Bennett are in charge of *Supreme*'s zero issue, which comes in the middle of a hot streak on the title, he notes. "We've hit high notes and low notes on *Supreme*—I think we've been hitting high notes recently, but it's hard to bring somebody back to a title in its 25th or 30th issue," says Liefeld. "Issue #0 takes you back and correlates what happens in the present with what happened in the past. From #0 on, in the regular *Supreme* book, we have Alan Moore coming on to write about four issues. By the end of it, we'll end up with two Supremes, the one who disappeared at the end of *Extreme Sacrifice*, and the new Supreme, who has absolutely no idea who he is. One of them will go to Heaven, and then go to Hell. When the Supreme who goes to Hell comes out of it, he'll be a character who has been around since the very beginning of Image. We don't really want to give away who that is—but he isn't a very nice person!"

Jo Duffy and Mike Deodato, Jr. are in charge of *Glory* #0. "Glory is a very exciting, offbeat character," says Liefeld, "She's a superheroine, a strong businesswoman, and she likes to go out and have a good time. I've never read an issue where Wonder Woman or Batgirl just wants to go out and have a night on the town. We're trying to make Glory more real. She recognizes her responsibility as a force of good. She learns that she was created to counteract a similar evil creation. In *Glory* #0, we reveal exactly who she is and what she's doing here."

Art: Rob Liefeld

Alan Moore is taking over the scripting of *Warchild*, and Liefeld will pencil it himself. "You haven't seen anything like this since *Watchmen*."

Liefeld is extremely excited about *Knightmare* #0, part of a title he believes is very under-ordered. "*Knightmare* has done tremendously well for us, and every issue sells out.


"I've always maintained that my love is drawing and creating comics, and I still do that for my pleasure and my sanity," explains Liefeld.

Liefeld Photo: By a Copyright Albert L. Ortega

Knightmare, Cybrid & related characters TM & © 1994 Rob Liefeld.

Cybrid Art: Sam Liu

this character. Knightmare is the character I've been the most enthusiastic about—I created and designed him, and hand-picked everyone who has worked on the book. We gave *Knightmare* #0 the full treatment, with a chromium cover. I really despised that stuff until [we used it on] *Avengelyne* #1, because I knew that title needed something extra, and people are reluctant to give anything new any sort of attention. *Knightmare* has metallic armaments all over his suit, so chromium really suits it. I'm plotting the issue, Marat Mychaels is pencilling, Al Vey is inking, and Robert Loren Fleming wrote a wicked script.

"We're also doing a new book called *Cybrid*," reveals Liefeld. "I don't know what you would call it. It's a science-fiction thriller."

"Those are going to be three exciting books. We know that there's a hardcore Extreme audience and we try to cater to them first, but the better we get, the more fans we'll reach."

But we can't risk overprinting nowadays—we print what is ordered and no more, so people are trying to reorder these books but they aren't available. *Knightmare* #0 is completely designed to give fans a kick-ass rock and roll story that peels back more layers of

Liefeld says that the biggest Extreme books at summer's end are *Berzerkers* #1, by Beau Smith and Dan Fraga, and *Bloodpool*, by Duffy and newcomer Pat Lee.

"Pat Lee is an incredible young artist," he says. "I get a lot of young talents who want to come and work at our studio. Most of the ones we hire do tremendous work, but I look at it as investing in the future, in what they're going to give me in three years, not what they're giving me at the time. They have to cut their teeth somewhere. Both Dan Fraga and Marat Mychaels were hungry and continue to get better—they worked out tremendously, and so did Chap Yaep. There's so much talent and energy in Pat Lee—I offered him *Bloodpool*, and he handed me 20 pages of designs and charac-

"We would like all of our books to ship on time," Liefeld says, "but given the decision, I would rather give somebody something that's going to be worth their money."

Art: By & Copyright 1995 Rob Liefeld

Liefeld at the Movies

Doom's IV is forever in limbo," Rob Liefeld says of the first of his projects heading to the silver screen. "I would be lying to say anything else. Amblin Entertainment is a strange place. When they first bought *Doom's IV*, they were on their third rewrite of *Plastic Man*. My friend Bryan Spicer, who just directed *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Movie*, was handpicked by Steven Spielberg to direct *Plastic Man*—he had his office set up over there. *Plastic Man* is currently on its *14th* rewrite and there is no *Plastic Man* movie in sight! It's one of those things where you say, 'This could take a while!' So, nothing much is happening with *Doom's IV*.

"*Prophet*, however, is really moving fast," he says. "When TriStar asked to hear the pitch, they bought it in the room. Before I got up to leave, they said, 'We are buying this.' There are lots of times when you wait for days to see if they're in or out, but they wanted a large science fiction/superhero franchise. *Prophet* is not really a superhero movie—it's a comic book movie because *Prophet* was a comic book first, I guess, but I look at it as a real big science fiction picture. They immediately hired two of the writers of *Demon Knight*, which was transformed into the *Tales From the Crypt* movie, and also wrote the second *Power Rangers* movie. They took the original treatment I had written and put it on steroids. The most important thing is the script, and that should be handed in this September. They're talking about a $50-$60 million budget for *Prophet*, and that's a pretty hefty chunk of change to spend going into a movie nowadays. I am of the belief that people want cool, kickass science fiction, and there's not a lot of it out there."

He's also very excited about the potential of an original story called *The Mark*. "I recently worked with a tremendous young writer named Nick Sagan, who wrote a screenplay for *The Mark* that kicks ass!" he says. "Nick revived the entire project after the first writer had fallen off. Nick really returned the original vision to the project. It's closer to a superhero movie in that the character has superpowers that will require some serious FX. Prophet can knock down steel walls and survive being dropped into the Alaskan tundra at zero degrees, but it's not like flying and shooting things out of your hands. The Mark is a character who has been given this centuries-old talisman that gives him a certain authority that he doesn't really want! I haven't seen a movie where the guy gets his powers and says, 'Could you get this away from me? I don't want this!' He spends

Art: Roger Cruz

"In today's marketplace, with five dozen team books out there, I decided *this* was what I wanted to do to set us apart," offers Liefeld of *Extreme 3000*.

ter sketches and background vehicles overnight. It was like his head exploded! It was fun to see, and it's a fun book."

Bloodpool's roster will consist of Task, Rubble, Seoul, Psilence and Wylder, while *Team Youngblood* draws to a close. "As we relaunch *Youngblood* in September with artist Roger Cruz and close out *Team Youngblood*, we'll let the readers decide what the final lineup will be for the new series," he says. "For the next few months, fans will be encouraged to send in a new character for the team and the lineup that they would like to see. I used to love it when the *Legion of Superheroes* would do that every year, and I don't see that sort of thing happening. *Youngblood* has always been closer to the Legion to me, especially with the amount of characters in the book, and it's finally finding the right tone. Roger Cruz is very fast and is sending in some incredible stuff, and every page gets better!

"There's an inter-series story going on between *Youngblood* and *Bloodpool* where the Youngblood membership gets pared down. The characters who are being kicked out—most of them haven't really been Youngblood members—were recruits from the Bloodpool to fill spots for other off-duty members. We're basically saying, 'Here's your pink slips—there's no more work for you here.' Being a member of Youngblood was always a very sexy job, and suddenly more than three-quarters of the team is being laid off! What happens to you after you've been genetically altered and enhanced and then fired? One of my favorite books as a kid was *Power Man and Iron Fist*. Jo Duffy took two characters who were directionless after the John Byrne/Chris Claremont stuff, and did a tremendous, fun job about two guys who turned their superheroing into a business! We're taking the guys who've been dropped from Youngblood and seeing how they make do."

Liefeld feels that in Beau Smith, he found the perfect writer for *Berzerkers*. "When *Berzerkers* came along, I said, 'These are a bunch of space cowboys, rough-'em-up adventurers,' " explains Liefeld, noting of the team that consists of Cross, Wildmane, Psi-storm, Grevlore and Hatchet. "But their saloons aren't on Earth, they're on other planets and dimensions. Beau has really done some cool stuff, and Dan Fraga is looking at this as an opportunity to grow into a series that he knows will be exposed to many people."

The delayed relaunch of *Prophet* is back on schedule with Chuck Dixon scripting the series drawn by Stephen Platt, complete with a new issue #1

Glory Art: Mike Deodato, Jr.

"Glory is a very exciting, offbeat character," Liefeld raves. "She's a superheroine, a strong businesswoman and she likes to go out and have a good time."

half the movie running from his responsibilities, and then figures out that he's up against a wall because he's the only guy who can stop this turn of events." Liefeld notes that his interests lie in big pictures. "When I go to Hollywood and try to sell these movies, I'm very conscious of what has gone before," he says. "If you're going to do a *Die Hard*-type picture, it had better be bigger than *Die Hard*, because they don't want to make the same movie, and they want to up the stakes. That's why I would call these big, ambitious movies.

"Of all of them, I would say that *Doom's IV* is the most ambitious, most FX-laden and the most costly. But, both *Prophet* and *The Mark* are on a *Star Wars* or *Terminator* level. If you're going to sit in a room and try to sell a movie, why not go for the gusto, and try to sell them the biggest, baddest thing? There's plenty of small, quiet stuff out there, and that doesn't interest me. *The Mark* was sold to Tom Cruise. *Doom's IV* stayed with Universal, and when Nick Sagan handed in his draft of *The Mark*, Paramount bought it—if they hadn't, Cruise could have taken it to another studio. But *Prophet* was sold directly to TriStar, and I felt how that was different than the other situations. At a studio, you're meeting directly with the very top people, and the studio has decided that they want the property. I try to cut to the quick, and it's obvious that they want a movie that's going to generate big revenues, licensing, soundtracks, the whole bit.

"They're not doing this to make art, they're doing this to make money, and I think when they look at *Prophet*, they look at the *Batmans* and *Terminators* and they want a huge franchise like those. It's the fastest process I've had so far from sale to script. It has been tremendously fast, so I have high hopes. *Prophet* is the situation that has worked out the best so far. It could be shot down tomorrow, but I'm very optimistic."

—Kim Howard Johnson

"*Prophet* is not really a superhero movie," says Rob Liefeld—the comics creator who's quickly invading Hollywood—of his newest project, set up at TriStar.

Prophet Art: Steven Platt/Trademark & Copyright 1995 Rob Liefeld

Liefeld is going into *Extreme 3000* with guns blazing.

Art: Rob Liefeld

ent release date can be better. With *Prophet*, Stephen Platt drew the most incredible story he has drawn to date, and at the peak of his artistic execution, it seems like everybody lost interest! The story is exciting and mysterious, and I didn't want to put it out and have it be ignored. So, we just switched release dates.

"We're using all the bells and whistles that we can to get people to open the damned comic book! It's like what we did with *Avengelyne*—we could have cashed in on the whole 'bad girl' thing and put some titillating shots in, give it to some hack to draw and give it the cheap treatment to cash out. But we're trying to build *Avengelyne* for the long term, a character and story that people will come back to every month and build interest. It's the same thing with *Prophet*. I want people to read *these* books and come back month after month."

Says Liefeld, "This is a hobby I'm obsessed with. I tell people that in the early days of Image, I would just open my door and money would fall in. But this is not something I do for cash, this is something I do for love. I could have thrown all this money into money market accounts and gone to Tahiti for the rest of my life! During 1992, '93 and the first part of '94, Image Comics was making *tremendous* amounts of money. I did not need the tax write-offs—there were a million better things to do with the cash. When people say I'm greedy and doing it just for the cash, they're obviously misinformed—I do this for the love."

Liefeld is frustrated with how the industry has developed recently, with too great an emphasis on "hot" books and creators, and too little attention paid to good comics.

"This industry is totally screwed up," he declares. "I'm coming at this as a veteran of this business—I'm about to begin my tenth year in comics.

(continued on page 60)

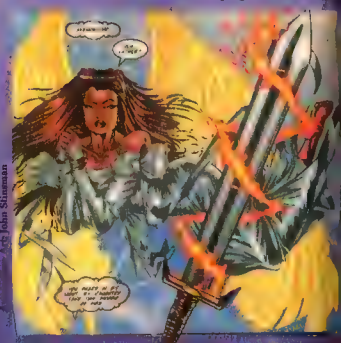
Knightmare Art: Marat Mychaels/Al Vey
Design & Layout: Evan Metcalf

and a wraparound chromium cover. The title was originally scheduled for release last spring, and Liefeld says that although "the numbers were good, it didn't seem like anybody wanted it.

"We could have put that book out and it would have been invisible. I decided we needed to retool this relaunch. People tell me that I do stuff that seems unconventional in the comics industry, but it's certainly not the first time I've heard of this being done. In the movie and TV industry, when something isn't ready, a differ-

"Knightmare is the character I've been the most enthusiastic about—I created and designed him, and hand-picked everyone who has worked on the book," Liefeld says.

According to Liefeld, "We're trying to build *Avengelyne* for the long term, a character and story that people will come back to every month and build interest."



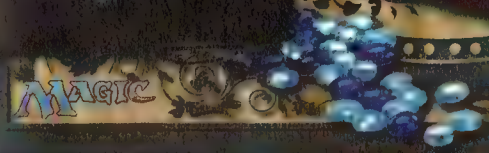
Art: John Stanmeyer

Give the gift of Magic

The ***Magic: The Gathering™ Gift Box*** contains everything two people need to learn the game of **Magic**. It includes two 60-card *Fourth Edition™* starter decks, an easy-to-understand illustrated rulebook, a card collector's checklist, glass counters to help you keep track of life totals, and a handy storage bag.

Fall '95 • $19.95

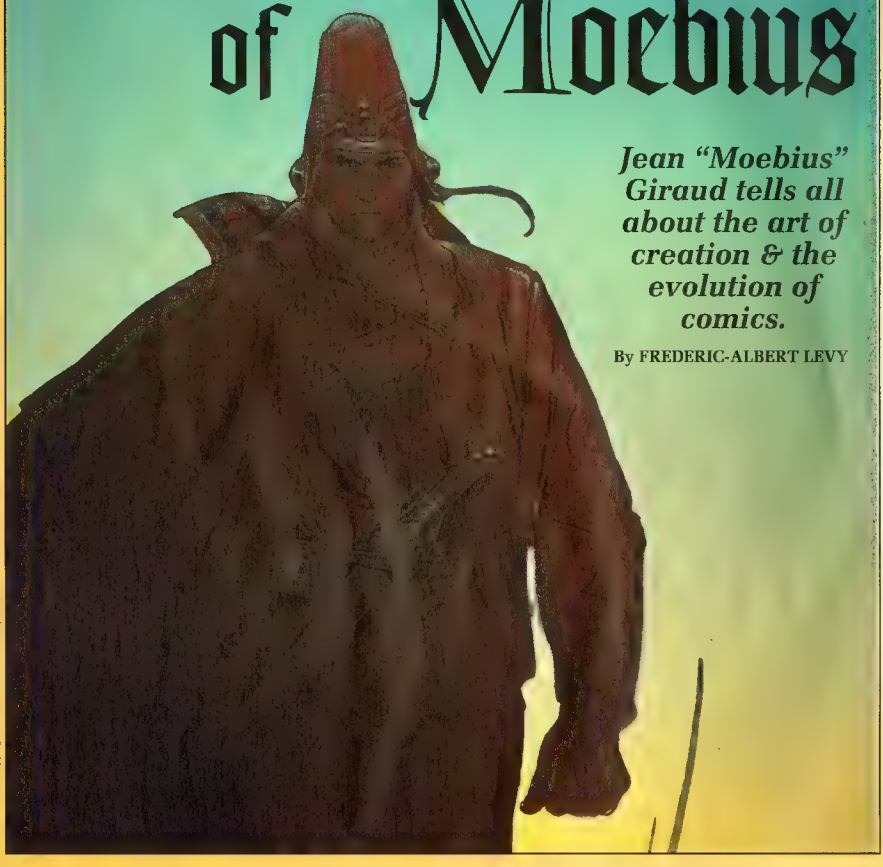
Wizards of the Coast Customer Service:
(206) 624-0933



MAGIC

Wizards OF THE COAST

The Many Faces of Moebius



Jean "Moebius" Giraud tells all about the art of creation & the evolution of comics.

By FREDERIC-ALBERT LEVY

All Art Copyright 1995 Starwatcher Graphics

I first discovered Moebius in the early 1960s. At that time, his Western series, Lieutenant Blueberry*—done under his real name of Jean Giraud (or, more accurately, signed "Gir")—was as much a staple in French comics as, say,* Superman *or* Spider-Man *in the United States.*

At the same time, being an avid SF reader, I also admired the work of an artist who was doing a wonderful job illustrating short stories by Poul Anderson, Robert Sheckley and other SF masters in the French edition of Galaxy *magazine. That artist signed his name "Moebius"—and until later, I didn't realize that he and "Gir" were one and the same.*

Like many readers, no doubt, I then often wondered why "Moebius," rather than "Gir," didn't actually write and/or draw some actual SF or fantasy comic stories. I didn't have to wonder for long.

In 1973, with the publication of the appropriately-titled "The Detour," in the weekly magazine Pilote *(home of the* Blueberry *series), Moebius had finally arrived on the comics scene. ("The Detour" is reprinted in the anthology* Moebius 2: Arzach & Other Fantasy Stories*, Marvel/Epic, 1987.)*

Since Hergé, the creator of Tintin,

no artist has had so profound an impact on European comics as Moebius. It all began in 1974, when Moebius, fellow artist Philippe Druillet, writer Jean-Pierre Dionnet as well as brand and associate Bernard Farkas decided to self-publish and created the magazine Métal Hurlant.

Up until then, the entire French-language comics industry, with a few exceptions, such as Jean-Claude Forest's Barbarella, was, as is still the case in the United States today, totally dominated by adventure series aimed at a teenage audience. In the space of three or four years, not only had that perception disappeared, but comics themselves had changed direction; mighty publishing empires were forced to adapt—or disappear.

Moebius' influence spread to America when the publishers of National Lampoon decided, in 1977, to issue an American edition of Métal Hurlant, translated Heavy Metal. Through that magazine, American fans first became aware of Moebius' seminal, ground-breaking SF and fantasy stories, such as Arzach and The Airtight Garage, which were later to influence an entire generation of new artists including Frank Miller (Sin City), Dave Gibbons (Watchmen) and Charles Vess (The Sandman).

All this exposure eventually brought Moebius to the attention of filmmakers, enabling him to moonlight as a design conceptualist for the motion picture industry. First, Chilean cult director Alejandro (El Topo) Jodorowsky who hired Moebius to storyboard and design his aborted 1976 production of Frank Herbert's Dune. Moebius' collaboration with Jodorowsky continued in the form of The Incal, a comic-book epic which the two began in 1980 and finally completed in 1988. (The Incal was released as three graphic novels by Marvel/Epic in 1988.)

Over the years, Moebius has likewise contributed designs to a number of top-notch SF films: space suits for Ridley Scott's ALIEN, costumes and vehicles for TRON, character designs for George Lucas' Willow and, more recently, non-terrestrial intelligences for James Cameron's The Abyss. He has been previously profiled in CS#1 and #3 and STARLOG #112.

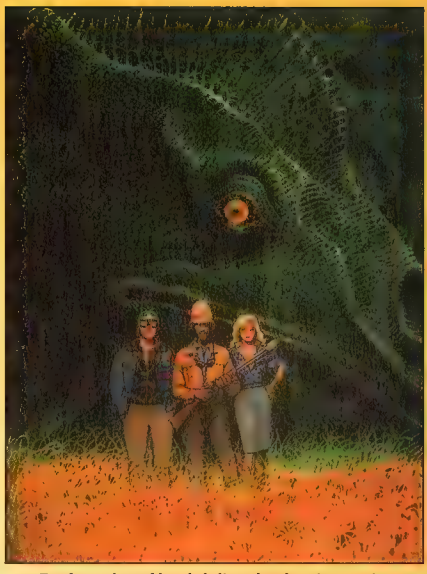
To quote author Harlan Ellison, Moebius is now regarded in France as a "national treasure." He was consecrated "Best Artist in Graphic Art" in 1982 by then-Minister of Culture Jack Lang and in 1985, was decorated Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of Arts & Letters), the highest French decoration for cultural and artistic achievements, by President Francois Mitterrand. A postage stamp honoring him and bearing one of his designs was issued by the French government in 1988.

COMICS SCENE: Tell us first about your "Three Faces of Eve" syndrome— all this Gir/Giraud/Moebius thing—not even mentioning the fact that we can distinguish at least two different Moebius styles over the years.

MOEBIUS: There may be two Moebius periods, but there are cycles in my work on *Blueberry* too. Every artist goes through various phases and, frankly, I don't think I feel like analyzing mine because it isn't a conscious process. The Gir/Giraud/Moebius triple act, on the other hand, that I can explain.

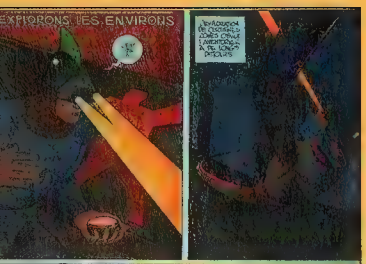
First of all, it's not really a "Three Faces of Eve" syndrome, as you put it, as there's no difference between Gir and Giraud. The *Blueberry* albums are signed "Gir" on the page, but the name on the cover is "Giraud." Gir is just a kind of pseudonym that I was weak enough to accept in the early days of my career. When I started doing comic books, many artists used their initials—like Hergé R.G., for George Remi—or the first three letters of their names. That was the fashionable way of signing one's work!

On a thematic level, *Blueberry* was really a young artist's dream, with a style derived from the comics I had read as a teenager: *Prince Valiant* by Hal Foster, *The Phantom* [by Lee Falk and Ray Moore], Alex Raymond [*Flash Gordon*], Milton Caniff [*Terry and The Pirates*] and all the classics. These were the great adventure strips that obviously belonged in the realms of fantasy, yet which told stories in a



For those who stubbornly believe that there is no art in comic books, there is Jean "Moebius" Giraud.

"American comics must learn to express personal, internal universes, deal with social or political themes, or truly original visions," the artist/writer/creator says.



Moebius still finds pleasure in creating new works, but he will eschew creating with computers...for now. "Some people will never give up pens and paper because of their...sensuality."

very straightforward, dramatic fashion.

To work in such a conventional genre and style opens many doors from an artistic standpoint, but, conversely, it hinders personal expression. I mean, it locks you up in a cultural ghetto, where comics are perceived as being kid's stuff. Admittedly, some artists like Ed Stevenson (*Bring Them Back Alive*) or Hergé still managed to be totally universal and quite profound while doing their so-called "kids' stuff." But suddenly, in the late '60s, early '70s, I discovered the American undergrounds, Robert Crumb and all that jazz, and I felt like the times, they were a-changin'. Consequently, I found my own personal way of expression through the Moebius moniker.

CS: Which, 20 years later, had not stopped Moebius from walking on the not-so-wild side.

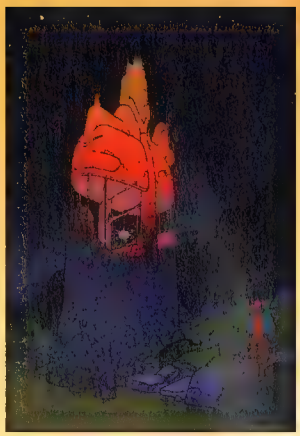
MOEBIUS: True, because in a way, you travel full circle. Moebius, indeed, now takes me back to conventional adventure, but I do find as much weirdness and mystery there as I expected to find in surrealism and stream-of-consciousness two decades ago. You must keep in mind that this was a younger man's decision back then. I sincerely believed that such a move would lead me to genuine artistic expression. The trouble is, once you've conquered your freedom, you have to follow the loop all the way through. Today, I consider *Blueberry* as honorable and artistic as anything I could achieve as Moebius.

CS: But what if somebody were to find you sitting in front of your drawing board and ask you, "Which one are you right now?"

MOEBIUS: I wouldn't have any difficulties answering that question. All of my work as "Gir" (or Giraud) is now connected with *Blueberry*. Whether I like it or not, it has become almost like a genre, or an imprint, with its own rules and assorted ceremonies, which can be "shaken but not stirred," if you see what I mean! Moebius, on the other hand, is by essence a transgression—and Jodorowsky's stories are always groundbreaking to large extent. This story we've done, *The Madwoman of the Sacred Heart*, like *The Incal*, starts in a very ordinary fashion, but develops by twists and turns into something very strange, very far out. As Gir, I can transgress some rules, but never disregard or ignore the entire conventions of the genre.

CS: Do you agree with those who say that SF stories are today's Westerns?

MOEBIUS: Yes, I do, because Westerns tell us about the end of one world, and the beginning of a new one, about the conflict between two conceptions of the world: The natural or traditional



Fans have been enjoying Moebius' work since 1973, when he burst upon the French comic book scene. Since then, he has helped revolutionize the international comic marketplace.

one, and the modern one, which brings in written laws, for example. During this period, when there were mostly unwritten laws, or self-imposed and self-enforced laws, the passions and human problems reached an intensity that they had never reached in the older, by-the-book European civilizations.

It is the same phenomenon in science fiction: The world of human laws is confronted by a virgin universe, outer space and time. Graphically, there is no direct link between the two genres, except of course that you can translate *any* kind of story into science fiction. It's the ultimate fictional melting pot, a magical, ever-expanding container. So, naturally, you can bring the Western into it; in fact, many writers have done so, even though the results sometimes read as a little contrived. On the other hand, I immensely enjoy Jack Vance's novels, which are not too far away from being Westerns in space. They often take the reader through vast, majestic landscapes, even deserts, inhabited by isolated human settlements, which have developed along idiosyncratic lines, very much like Old Western societies.

CS: Do they employ the same kind of heroes?

MOEBIUS: It depends what periods of each genre we're talking about. Science fiction is *always* a reflection of the present. There were periods during which its heroes were poor, lonesome "cowboys." There were other periods during which they were a group of

Flights of fancy are common in Moebius' work, as evidenced by his *Airtight Garage* series.

Moebius has lent his considerable talents to Hollywood, where he has done conceptual [illegible] like *Willow*, as seen here with [illegible] for Madmartigan.

"To me, adolescents who are stuck in a single genre, like superheroes, are already old people," Moebius offers.

"[illegible] any kind of story into science fiction," explains Moebius. "It's the ultimate fictional melting pot."

Spider-Man & Elektra Characters: Trademark & Copyright 1995 Marvel Entertainment Corp.

Design & Layout: Evan Metcalf

One can find this Elektra piece, and his other Marvel posters—including Iron Man, the Punisher and Spider-Man—in *Fusion*.

characters who had banded together. In the final analysis, the real hero in science fiction is always mankind. Science fiction is neither about science nor fiction. It is about mankind caught in some kind of cosmic drama. There lies its beauty, charm and portentousness.

CS: How have computers influenced or affected your work?

MOEBIUS: Strangely enough, I didn't seek computers; they're the ones who found me! When you deal with SF themes, as I do, you can hardly avoid computers. But they're just set pieces, like the "little green men from Mars." However, computers are now part of man's future. Man will become the computer and the computer will become man. What we're dealing with here is a *very* fatal attraction!

I first came across computers when I was invited to work on *TRON*. Later, I began experimenting with my son's Amiga system, and eventually, I learned how to do real artwork using paintbox programs. I also spent a lot of time working with a remarkable team of computer graphic artists on *Starwatcher*, which was going to be an animated film made entirely with computer images.

One thing I did learn while doing *Starwatcher* is that you have to find your own specific ways to use computers. I leave industrial design to industrial designers, or computer-generated still life paintings to those who are interested in such things. I personally am fascinated by a much more mysterious aspect of computers—their seemingly direct link with the unconscious mind.

I've noticed that, after a while, you start using the computerized tools like a sleepwalker. You enter an unbelievably complex domain, where you can break a picture, take it apart, change it, put it back together, start all over. Computers make artistic expression and the expression of the unconscious mind one and the same. In this way, they can be a form of therapy. A true artist doesn't become warped or lost because of this infinity of possibilities, because he learns to recognize, to feel, the moment when his true oeuvre has emerged and is there.

CS: Is there any chance, in your opinion, of seeing the birth of a "computer only" generation or artists?

MOEBIUS: Wait. I didn't say that I *drew* with computers. I said they were a form of pure graphic expression, which is not the same thing. I know that some high-definition screens and electronic pens make it possible to draw directly into the computer, but that kind of equipment is expensive and, frankly, a little cumbersome. Undoubtedly, there will come a day when one can learn to draw without using any paper, but I believe that some people will never give up paper and pens because of their...sensuality. There are some forms of pleasure derived from putting a pen to paper that you can't yet get from a computer. Indeed, my business is my pleasure, and therefore efficiency cannot be achieved without pleasure. Efficiency means creating beauty, and there can be no beauty without pleasure. Clever, isn't it?

CS: Why do you still keep exploring new themes, new fields of art?

MOEBIUS: I have to. I no longer have quite as much energy as I had when I created *Métal Hurlant*. So in order to derive as much pleasure from my work as I can, I must come up with new ways of keeping myself entertained. The best way of doing this is to always experience new things.

CS: How were you originally involved in *Métal Hurlant*?

MOEBIUS: I just felt like creating a comic magazine with a couple of friends. It's the kind of bug you catch easily when you reach a certain age! We all wanted to create something unforgettable, launch a rising star into the world of mainstream culture.

CS: And would you say that you succeeded?

MOEBIUS: I think we did. Like everything else, this is, of course, in the eye of the beholder. If you are a true comics fan, *Métal Hurlant* or its "children" are a must, no question about that. If you just enjoy reading comics now and again, especially today, I suppose you could manage to not come across it, but a historian of the field would likely point out to you that what you read wouldn't exist if it had not been for *Métal Hurlant*.

This is true with any form of culture. Some people are never interested in what came before them, but I believe that there always comes a day when, if you wish to learn about yourself, you've got to find out about your ancestors, so to speak. If you don't ask

yourself that kind of question, then your relationship with the rest of the world will always be somewhat crippled. So, *Métal Hurlant* was there, and it *did* open up new roads, which have since become highways traveled by one and all.

CS: Even generating some traffic jams, especially in the mid-80s.

MOEBIUS: I don't think one can ever publish too many comics, but I'll agree with you about one thing: not everything should have been collected in album [book] form. After a while, the bookstores became flooded under the sheer number of comic albums published and got fed up. The current regime of publication is certainly brought about by the economic recession.

CS: How did you feel when *Métal Hurlant* eventually folded?

MOEBIUS: I was sad, but I had long ceased contributing to the magazine. I'll be sad when the end of the world comes, too. Right from the beginning, *Métal Hurlant* must have been programmed, consciously or unconsciously, to have a short life span. We looked at it as a living thing, and like any living thing, it was born, lived and ultimately died. I'm only speculating about this with the benefit of hindsight. At the time we created the magazine, we are always the victims of our impulses, and they, in turn, bring us invaluable presents.

CS: When working in the film industry, do you see yourself as an insider or an accidental tourist?

MOEBIUS: I am an incredible film buff. For my generation, motion pictures, especially American pictures, were synonymous with culture, art and philosophy. Because of all the knowledge I carry in my head, I feel that I could be a filmmaker too. However, there is still a wall which I cannot break, which is the wall of reality—putting a film project together is an enormously complex thing and until now, I haven't been given the opportunity to make a film. Maybe this will change.

I discovered that people who make movies regard filmmaking almost as a matter of life and death. They feel as if they're going to die if they don't make their films. I'm starting to understand that. As I said, until now, I feel I have flirted with film, but we haven't gone steady yet!

CS: How does it feel to contribute designs to films directed by Ridley Scott, Jim Cameron, Ron Howard, Luc Besson?

MOEBIUS: It's a rather special attitude—a kind of controlled parasitism. I take what they give me, I absorb it, I put it in front of me and then, on top of it, I embellish it with my own images. That way it's still my creation, without being completely mine. It's a rather comfortable situation.

Comics are a very nice medium for an artist because we have total freedom, but it's the kind of freedom where—it's like if someone said to you, "You must stay inside this room for a year, totally locked in, but in there, you've got total freedom to do anything you want!" With movies, especially the kind of big-budget pictures I've usually ended up working on, there seem to be no limitations to what you can do.

CS: What are your thoughts on virtual reality?

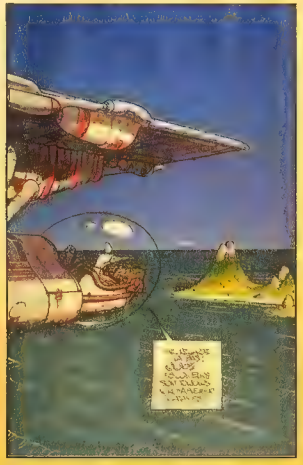
MOEBIUS: It is wonderful, and maybe even a little bit scary at the same time. If the technology continues to improve, I can see a day in the near future when we won't be able to tell the difference between a VR environment and the real one. The question then becomes how to tell what is real and what is false. Fundamentally, that's a question which has faced our consciousness since the beginning of time. We already have access to the perfect VR world: dreams. The day we can enter virtual imagery as smoothly and convincingly as we enter a dream is the day when we, as a species, are going to have to face the question of what is more worthwhile: living in the dream of reality, or in the simulated dream?

CS: You're working on a CD-ROM with Byron Preiss Multimedia.

MOEBIUS: Ah, yes. Byron is an old friend. He put together an *Art of Moebius* book a few years ago. When he proposed a CD-ROM project, I said yes immediately, because I'm very interested in exploring the possibili-

(continued on page 64)

This year, Moebius will publish *Fusion*, a book collecting many of his recent works.



"Science fiction is about neither science nor fiction," reveals Moebius. "It is about mankind caught in cosmic drama."

For director James Cameron, Moebius did original designs for the aliens of *The Abyss*.

THE ROOK Returns!

Bringing order to chaos, the time-traveling cowboy blasts back into comic book action.

By JOE NAZZARO

"I don't think you've ever seen a character like this!" promises writer Tom Sniegoski of Harris Comics' revival of *The Rook*. "I know you hear many people saying it, but I read so many of the comics that are being done now that I just don't think anybody is approaching a character this way."

Two decades after his adventures in Warren's black-and-white horror magazine *Eerie*, then his own short-lived magazine, Restin Dane is back in a new supernatural action-adventure series. Originally created by Budd Lewis and Bill DuBay, the time-traveling cowboy has now been revived by Sniegoski, who's also writing Harris' *Vengeance of Vampirella* book (CS #43).

Recalls Sniegoski, "I had originally been doing some work on an upcoming series called *Hyde 25*, and that was before the *Vampirella* series was given to me as well. I got *Vampirella* and was doing many things with the other Warren characters, like reviving them and altering them a bit for the '90s. Meloney Crawford Chadwick [Harris' editorial director] kept saying, 'You know, we've really got to do something with The Rook,' and I really didn't have any idea what to do with the character. People who do remember the old character have a strong recollection of, 'Boy, I remember him,' but if you pressed them about it and asked, 'Well, what was cool?' they couldn't tell you very much. They just remember the name, and Meloney kept saying, 'That name is really strong,' and I think that's what sticks with people.

"One day, she had been talking to me about various people who were attempting to revive the Rook for her, and how nobody was even coming close to that different quality that she wanted for the book. She felt the whole time-traveling cowboy thing, which is what the original character was, didn't work any more; it wore thin very fast. That was also the problem I was having with the character, because when I thought about doing something with the Rook, what always stopped me was I would look at him and say, 'A time-traveling cowboy with robots; I'm just not interested.' Meloney mentioned that she might just redesign a character around the name, and that's pretty much what I did.

"At the same time, I took the original character—this is Restin Dane, the original Rook—but this is Restin Dane after something has happened to him. We're not ignoring the fact that he was the time-traveling cowboy, but there is this grey area where after those adventures, something happened which launched him in another direction. That's what I proposed to Meloney, and she said, 'Yeah, go on.' I think that was the first time somebody was approaching the character from a dif-

I'M SO TIRED. BLOAGH... SO MUCH VIOLENCE... SO MUCH DEATH... NEED TO REST...
THIS IS WHAT CHAOS WAITS FOR. WE GROW TIRED OF THE BATTLE. SQUEAMISH AT THE SIGHT OF BLOOD. WE LET OUR GUARD DOWN AND CHAOS BEGINS TO GROW.

"The artwork is some of the most beautiful I've seen in years," raves Sniegoski of penciller Kirk Van Wormer's work.

The Rook: Trademark 1995 William DuBay

Art: Kirk Van Wormer & Joe Weems

ferent angle, and I was also connecting him to the Vampirella universe."

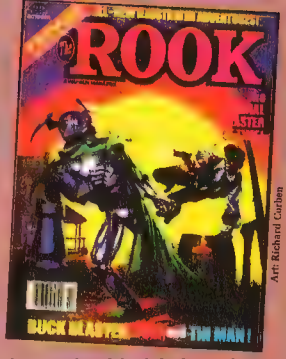
While new readers need not have read any of the Rook's original stories, those events have provided a catalyst for what's happening today. "We hinted in the mini-series *The Chains of Chaos*, which was the first appearance of the new Rook, that when Restin Dane was time-traveling around and going through his wacky adventures, unbeknownst to him, he was poking holes in the fabric of reality, so by doing these time jaunts, he was causing a lot of damage to what I call the 'reality flow.' The main thrust of the *Rook* series is that he's aware of the damage that he has caused, and is attempting to repair those problems.

"The major problem is that when Dane poked holes in the fabric of reality, it made all these realities visible, and this Chaos God got a glimpse of them and said, 'Oh boy, look at all these places I could rule; I'm going to affect these multiple realities with a chaotic influence.' The Rook's job is to get to these realities before Chaos can take root."

Explaining the series' premise, Sniegoski reveals that major changes have taken place for the Rook between his original Warren exploits and what's now occurring. "After Restin Dane's original adventures in time, he joins the Danse Macabre, a supernatural organization that pops up in *Vampirella* quite often. After joining the group, he gets involved in an adventure which sends him on a trip to the jungles of South America. While attempting to find an object of great supernatural power, he's betrayed and almost killed by the Danse Macabre.

"As far as they're concerned, he was killed on this mission, but what has happened to Restin Dane—and this is where the series takes off in a completely different direction—the object he was looking for is actually a sentient being with its own objectives. This being is limited in terms of what it can do because of a lack of mobility, and needs a host to get around and accomplish its objectives. Well, here we have Restin Dane dying and wanting revenge on the people who struck him down, so he makes a deal with this sentient being to act as its host. That armor you're seeing on the character is really a covering, a skin, a living thing.

"Basically, you have a character acting as a force for good, and his other half, which is this sentient skin, is a force of absolute evil, so it's a balance between the two. They despise each other, but they need each other to survive. I would say Dane is within minutes of dying. He has no choice, and that's one of the really frustrating things he has to deal with, that his life has completely changed now. He discovers that by bonding with this creature they can both achieve the goals they're looking for, but it's a constant struggle between them as to who's in control. Dane tends to think he's always



The original Rook battled robots and other menaces in his own Warren comic magazine in the late '70s and early '80s.

Vampirella, The Rook & Related Characters & Art: Copyright 1979, 1994, 1995 Harris Publications

winning, but little does he know that the sentient skin, which is called Slough, has its own plans and is coming close to achieving them."

Slough's actual origin will remain a secret for the time being, although Sniegoski says the symbiotic skin does have a direct link to the Chaos God that Dane is battling. "The skin wants to eliminate the forces of chaos, because of its resentment," the writer hints. "It has been existing on Earth for hundreds of thousands of years, bitter and angry, and using other forms of life as hosts against what rejected it. Restin Dane is the perfect host body because he's a force of absolute good. Usually, the skin would be attracted to something of absolute evil, but it would just be burned out, whereas Restin Dane is this shining knight, so the creature is thinking, 'I may be repulsed at merging with this being of absolute good, but a balance will be kept.' "

Fortunately, Dane's unwilling partnership with Slough has some positive side-effects. "Since the armor is a form of skin, it has a morphing ability," explains Sniegoski. "It's not only bulletproof, but can also grow weapons, such as knives and occasionally a chaotic bazooka, which can shoot bolts of energy. The chaos skin almost has the abilities of an electric eel, where it can expel chemical blasts from its body. Since Restin Dane was hurt so badly, the skin also acts as a form of life support. One of Dane's eyes was seriously damaged, so it compensates for that as well. It's mostly protection against the chaotic forces they'll be coming up against, but at the same time, it can shape-shift into a normal-looking set of clothing, so you wouldn't even know it was there. In the first issue, Restin is in this really funky looking kind of Clint Eastwood Western garb and an eye patch, so this skin can take the form of whatever it needs to take."

Art: Kirk Van Wormer & Caesar

Cowboy hero no more, the Rook is reborn as a metaphysical warrior against Chaos.

In addition to his armored ally, the Rook has a more down-to-earth companion in the form of a large black bird. As with many characters in this series, however, there's much more to his feathered friend. "I refer to him as Restin's spirit animal," says Sniegoski. "It's a form of companionship he got during that grey period you didn't see, where he formed a relationship with this crow, which is also a connection with a rook—a large, black bird. There are those connotations, but the bird is his spirit animal, his companion. There's almost a symbiotic link between him and this bird, which at one stage was injured as well. Restin Dane is a robotics expert, and has enhanced the bird and kept it alive. Right now, it's cool and funky to look at, but as the story progresses, you'll learn more about the bird. It's a major character, and while Dane loves this animal, Slough despises it. The bird senses something is seriously wrong, and that this isn't a good union."

The Rook's cast of characters will be a combination of new creations and assorted alumni from the original series—with an occasional twist. "The main characters right now are Restin Dane the Rook, Poe the bird and members of the Danse Macabre, who have a serious mad against Dane, especially since they found out he's still alive. They fear him quite a bit and don't want him around. There's a character called Krause, a major villain who'll show up every once in a while. I don't plan on getting rid of him any time soon.

"You'll also be seeing some characters from the old *Rook* stories revamped for the '90s and showing up in the new series. For example, Manners, one of the robot characters, the equiv-

Art: Kirk Van Wormer & Joe Weems

The new Rook originally appeared in the mini-series *The Chains of Chaos* with Warren's babe-in-residence Vampirella.

dent of Alfred the butler in the old stories, will be returning. He'll have taken on another role now, because the Rook has changed so much, Manners must change accordingly. Any time we introduce a character from the old stories, it will be as if he's brand-spanking new."

Although Sniegoski is already working on *The Rook*'s sixth issue, he prefers to keep the writing as spur-of-the-moment as possible. "I want to keep myself guessing, as well as the readers," he notes.

"The first story is called 'A Fistful of Chaos.' At the end of *The Chains of Chaos*, the Chaoschild, the manifestation of a chaotic being, was basically blown up, and fragments of his body were shot throughout the reality flow. The Rook is in the process of trying to capture all these fragments before they take root. One particular piece has landed in this Western reality, and has begun to grow. There's a family named Storm living in the desert. Caleb Storm is a former bounty hunter, and he and his family have retired from that violent past and are attempting to form a life on their farm. They're sucked into this chaotic nightmare by a gang of roving zombies, re-animated corpses of people Caleb Storm had killed as a bounty hunter. The Rook zeroes in on these chaotic manifestations and gets involved with Caleb Storm in defeating the Chaos Force in the Old West. We also introduce the 'Four Horsemen of Chaos,' these really funky, repulsive Western villains: Dirty Sally, Engine, Pale Rider and Boot Hill.

"Since the Rook is reality-hopping all over the place trying to wipe out the chaos influence, you'll be seeing him in the Middle Ages, where there will definitely be some wild villain we can introduce. He's going to be bouncing all over the place. The second two issues are a gangster piece that pays homage to *The Maltese Falcon*, so you're never sure where this character is going to show up."

According to Sniegoski, there's also a good chance that readers will be seeing a few familiar faces from the Harris universe popping up from time to time. "At first, you won't be seeing any major characters, but it wouldn't surprise me if by issue #8 or #9 you see a Vampirella crossover. They exist in the same place, and they have many of the same acquaintances. Neither of them trust the Danse Macabre that much, so that's enough to warrant a crossover between them."

Sniegoski is quick to share credit for *The Rook* with artist Kirk Van Wormer, who has created a unique bio-organic ambiance for the book. "Kirk is one of the most amazing people in the world to be working with. He reads the scripts I send him and then he often has a completely different take on what I've described. He takes everything to the next level, and I'll get these pages over the fax machine and I'll say, 'Oh my God, this is repulsive!' I think of something bad in my mind, but he takes it beyond that. We talk two or three times a week, and he'll say, 'You described it this way in the script, but what if you took it and twisted it a little this way instead?' That brings a great deal to the book. He's also giving *The Rook* what I hoped I would see, which is an almost organic feel; the living armor is but a piece of a much larger creature, so whenever we see the Rook in a chamber or a room where he stores his equipment, the walls around him have a living and breathing feel to them. It's really creepy. Kirk is doing some of the most beautiful artwork I've seen in a

(continued on page 62)

Art: Max Mignola

Design & Layout Evan Stewart

"I don't think anybody is going to be able to predict where this comic is going to go," says *Rook* writer Tom Sniegoski.

The Four Horsemen of Chaos—Boot Hill, Pale Rider, Dirty Sally and Smoke—are hot on the Rook's trail.
...HE IS MEAN, PROCICALLY REPENSELESS. YOU WILL SEND 3 FIERCE, ASSENS OF MY CAUSE, AND THEY WILL DESTROY HIM AND ALL WHO OPPOSE MY HOLY WILL.
THEN, THIS BARBARIC WORLD SHALL TRULY FEEL THE GLORY OF MY PRESENCE.
NEXT: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE CHAOTIC...

Art: Kirk Van Wormer & Joe Weems

Mousing Around

Look who's back in action! Yes, it's Mickey Mouse and thanks to director Chris Bailey, he's looking for a "Runaway Brain."

Mickey has a "Runaway Brain" and director Chris Bailey is the man responsible.

By BOB MILLER

When people see the little demon Mickey, it'll be interesting to see how they respond. When his body becomes the house of this monster's brain, it changes his appearance quite a bit."

So says Chris Bailey, director of "Runaway Brain," the latest Mickey Mouse cartoon. In this adventure, Disney's famous rodent undergoes a startling metamorphosis. "I think that's one reason why this cartoon got made, actually," Bailey says. "The studio knows that Mickey has become a little bit bland, and they want to do something to shape up his image. At the same time, you don't want to do something that's going to alienate people. So by having Mickey become the victim of a brain-switching experiment, I can take the cute, cuddly corporate symbol and just turn him into this vicious, sharp-toothed thing.

"One thing I tried to do with the cartoon—and I think I've been reasonably successful—is take the personality from the black-and-white Mickey cartoons and put it in the color body, because I really feel that once the cartoons went to color and the studio got more successful, Mickey became less heroic."

In researching Mickey's history, Bailey found that, "In the first decade of Mickey cartoons, he was heroically triumphant in about 80 percent of the cartoons. Then, by the next decade, he was heroically triumphant in 50 percent. In the last 10 years of Mickey's shorts, he was heroically successful in *none* of the cartoons. He became content in his failure.

"For example, in 'The Pointer,' Mickey is camping with Pluto, sitting at the campfire, and he says, 'I hate beans. I'm going to go hunt me a bear.' He throws the can of beans away, and goes looking for this bear. Unlike the early Mickey, who would fight or shoot the bear, this Mickey saw the bear, screamed, ran home and decided beans were OK.

"That was *awful*. Whatever happened to the Mickey from 'Building a Building,' where the boss gave him a little bit of crap, and Mickey, without hesitation, jumped on this guy 10

times his size and just got into a big old brawl with him? Or 'Two Gun Mickey,' or 'Shanghaied,' or any of those great early cartoons, which really portrayed him as an action-adventure hero. I wanted to do that with this cartoon."

At first, Bailey admits, "I really was not that familiar with Mickey Mouse cartoons. I had seen a few over the years, but I grew up on the Warner Bros. cartoons. They didn't show Disney cartoons on TV, so all the Mickey cartoons I've seen have been the ones I've been exposed to since coming to work at the studio.

"When this project was first offered to me, I immediately got ahold of all the cartoons I could, and I started looking for the personality traits in Mickey that appealed to me. And the ones that appealed to me—because I like action-adventure movies, superhero comics, that type of thing—were the early, action-adventure Mickey.

"I wanted to portray Mickey as a young man, *not* the affluent Mickey he became later. So in his apartment, I gave him a video game, and there are a couple of empty pizza boxes, which shows the most important thing in his mind *isn't* keeping his apartment clean after all. He has a dead plant in the corner.

"Mickey [voiced by Wayne Allwine] doesn't have money in this cartoon. He's renting a house, and he has to come up with some quick money to keep from disappointing Minnie [Russi Taylor]. So, he answers a want ad in the newspaper and ends up becoming the unwitting subject of a mad scientist's brain-switching experiment."

Mickey gets his brain switched with Julius, a giant, rotting monster that looks a little like Black Pete.

The scientist is a monkey, Dr. Frankenollie (voiced by Kelsey Grammer), named after two of the legendary Nine Old Men (Disney's preeminent animators), Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston.

"Originally, I wanted to use Dr. X from the old Floyd Gottfredson Mickey comic strip," Bailey relates. "They [management] felt he was a little too old-fashioned-looking. So, I updated him a little bit, and they felt the name 'Dr. X' wasn't quite clever enough. Todd Kurasawa, the storyboard artist at the time, came up with 'Dr. Frankenollie,' which I thought was perfect, because it's sort of a take on Frankenstein, but as 'Frankenollie,' it's an in-joke."

Mickey's brain is switched with a giant, rotting monster named Julius, who curiously resembles Black Pete (Jim Cummings, taking the part from Will Ryan, who voiced Pete for Disney in the 1980s), though he's 10 times the size. The monster, upon finding himself in Mickey's body, runs amok in the city. The brains switch again, and it's up to Mickey to stop him and rescue Minnie from his clutches.

"There *was* a controversy over Pete," Bailey explains. "Is he Pete? Is he a monster? In my mind, he was very clearly a patchwork monster that just resembled Pete. I wanted to give him the old pegleg, not only because it's classic, but I thought it was funny that the old mad scientist couldn't find another leg to give him, so he gave him a pegleg. This one's made of steel while the old one's made of wood. It's

"The studio knows that Mickey has become a little bland, and they want to do something to shape up his image," Bailey offers. Hence, "Runaway Brain."

All Art Copyright 1995 The Walt Disney Company

Bailey is definitely gearing Mickey Mouse up for the '90s—check out the tonsil exam being given by Minnie.

a little homage. There's even a gag associated with it. It has to do with how Mickey defeats the monster. It's certainly not making fun of anyone's physical shortcomings.

"But some people thought, '*Are* we making fun of the handicapped?' Disney doesn't want to offend people with these cartoons. We want them to be funny but not go too far. We asked Roy Disney at special 'peg' meeting: Is the pegleg OK? And Roy said, 'Yes. We can go ahead with that.' "

Bailey has worked at the Disney studio since *The Great Mouse Detective*, animating on *Rescuers Down Under*, then directing two projects for EuroDisney: a post-show for "It's a Small World" ("really a giant commercial for France Telecom") and a six-minute pre-show for the CircleVision time-travel show.

When Bailey returned to the States, he developed several shorts for Disney's character merchandising department. "They wanted to do three Mickey shorts a year, each with a certain theme, so you would have one year of Space Mickey, the next year, Monster Mickey, that type of thing. So, every year you would have new toys and sheets to correspond to that, and build Mickey's awareness to the public. After we developed these ideas, they decided not to do shorts, so the ideas went on the shelf.

"From there, I supervised the computer animation for *Hocus Pocus* with the talking cat," Bailey continues. "Right in the middle of that, I got a call from Tom Schumacher [VP of development], and he said, 'Michael Eisner wants to do another Mickey short for Mickey's 65th birthday.' So, I dusted off all the Mickey ideas, made another pitch and went through the same approval process. They whittled down the ideas they wanted to do, and 'Runaway Brain' is what they finally came up with."

According to Bailey, the short comes from a department called The Lunatic Fringe, which is also producing *Fantasia Continued* and other projects considered not to be part of Disney's annual animated feature release plan.

"Brain" was scheduled to premiere in August with *A Kid in King Arthur's Court*, with a wide release to other family films. "They want to release it wide, because there was a little disappointment with how the last Roger Rabbit short fared ["Trail Mixup"], because it came out with *A Far Off Place*, which didn't do well at the box office. Nobody saw the cartoon. So, they're trying to make sure that doesn't happen with 'Runaway Brain,' " Bailey says.

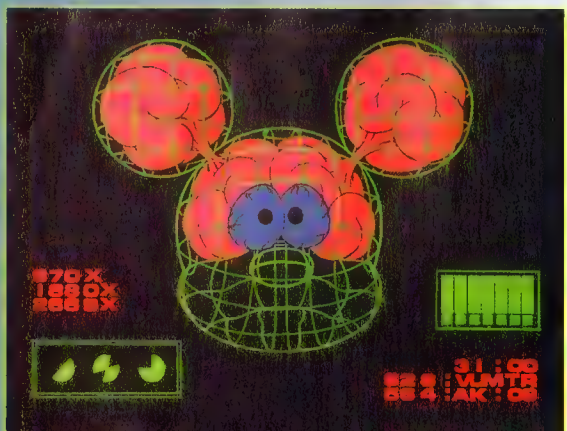
On "Brain," the head of animation was Andreas Deja, the quintessential Disney animator responsible for Jafar in *Aladdin* and Scar in *The Lion King*. His current project is the lead in *Hercules*.

"Because Andreas has a solid acting background, I have him doing the key acting scenes throughout the whole movie," Bailey says. "He would animate the establishing scenes and set the style for other people to follow."

Says Deja, "I animated a scene at the movie's beginning. He's in his living room playing video games, not paying attention to anything. That's Mickey Mouse being Mickey. I concentrated on that part. Throughout the production, I helped with some design work for the monster and the other characters and drawing, in the squishy, squashy style of the '40s. We were trying to do the Mickey of 1941, which is 'The Nifty Nineties,' not the 'Brave Little Tailor' one."

"Runaway Brain" is the first project done by Disney France for the Feature Animation division. Before that, the studio operated under the auspices of Disney TV Animation, producing Disney Afternoon shows like *TaleSpin* and *Goof Troop*, a Winnie the Pooh Christmas special, *DuckTales: The Movie* and *A Goofy Movie*. Last year, Disney Feature Animation took over the studio to produce "Runaway Brain" and their current project, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

"Most of them were happy being a part of Disney Feature Animation, where as an artist you spend an inordinate amount of time making the work great," Bailey relates. "For Saturday morning, which is where



Who knew that Mickey's brain went all the way up to his ears?

With "Runaway Brain," there was no script," Bailey reveals. "It's the *right* way of doing cartoons."

they had done the work before, the emphasis was always on *quantity*. And now it's on *quality*.

"In television animation, the animator has very little freedom. There's a position called character layout, where an animator actually does the poses for the acting. In feature animation, we don't do that. The animator might get a layout drawing, but it's there for size, nothing more. It's not 'on model.' It's the animator's job not only to act the scene correctly, but to really interpret it the way he wants to do it.

"And so, for many people over there who haven't done that before, it was intimidating. For another group, they immediately jumped right in and maybe went too far. That was not unexpected.

"They love Tex Avery animation in France. It's very rubbery and very extreme, but they've been doing television animation for so long—which isn't extreme at all. Even when they animate *DuckTales* or *Goof Troop*, they make them move like little humans. So, we were telling them, 'Take Mickey and squish and squash the hell out of him.' And they were very timid about that. They actually felt that we were trying a different style.

"It was really about getting them comfortable with these characters where they could loosen up. One animator told me that what I was asking for was *so* extreme, that if he did it on one of the TV shows under the old management, he *knew* he would have to do it over. There was no question in his mind that he wasn't allowed to animate that extreme. But when you look at the Mickey cartoon, there's nothing more extreme than you would find in any of the classic Disney cartoons in terms of animation.

"Andreas told them, 'OK, this is Disney. This is the latitude you can have doing cartoony animation without it being Tex Avery, which isn't Disney.' There really was a level of intimidation on their part."

Bailey wanted to make sure that "Runaway Brain" had the rich color that Disney is known for, so he utilized their CAPS coloring system.

For the Americans working in Paris, the language barrier was a problem, not only in relaying instructions, but in the way the French animated the characters' dialogue.

"Most of the artists don't speak English. Yet," says Deja, "they're animating a foreign language. They just have a different way of pronouncing words. For example, they don't say 'Mick-ee.' they say 'Mick-ay.' Whenever Minnie would come in through the door and say, 'Hi Mickey,' she would open her mouth really wide. So, for the dialogue scenes, the French watched the Americans say the words for them, and observed the mouth movements the Americans made."

Previously, the French used a digital paint system called Pixibox to color *A Goofy Movie*. "Runaway Brain," however, was colored with Disney's CAPS (Computer Assisted Paint System), as has been done with their studio's features since *The Little Mermaid*.

Bailey worked closely with art director Ian Gooding to give the cartoon a modern style, combined with the "richness of the '40s cartoons." The director also credits head of background Dan Cooper, head of layout Jim

(continued on page 62)

MACHINE MAN

By JOE NAZZARO & SHEELAGH J. WELLS

Most moviegoers are unfamiliar with the work of Chris Halls, but that may have changed thanks to *Judge Dredd*. Not only did Halls help design many of the film's major props, vehicles and characters, but he's also responsible for creating and building Mean Machine, the psychotic cyborg who tries to make mincemeat of Dredd (Sylvester Stallone) and his reluctant companion, Fergie (Rob Schneider).

Believe it or not, the 24-year-old Halls has been working in the film business for the better part of a *decade*, boasting a résumé that would probably make many up-and-coming FX artists green with envy. "I had just turned 16 when I started working in films," he recalls. "I did a bit of work for free, in order to get my foot in the door, but my first proper job was working with [Image Animation head] Bob Keen on *Nightbreed*.

"I was lucky in that Bob put me with one of his head technicians assisting on makeup, so I was instantly thrown into being on set and applying prosthetics. I worked on the character Boone [played by Craig Sheffer], who wore prosthetics every time he changed. That was also my first experience coming up against actors who didn't want somebody who looked as young as I did touching their faces."

Age notwithstanding, Halls managed to leap from one job to another, quickly soaking up knowledge and technique as he went along. "After *Nightbreed*, I worked on *Hardware* for director Richard Stanley, sculpting and building mechanics for the robot. Then, I went to work for *Spitting Image* for a while, doing engineering work for them."

During that period, Halls also broke into the comic book industry, working on such titles as Fleetway's *2000 A.D.*, *Red Mist* for Marvel UK and Dark Horse's popular *ALIEN* series. Halls already had some first-hand experience with the bio-mechanical killing machines, having sculpted the miniature creature, head, body suit and mechanical chestburster seen in *ALIEN*^{3}.

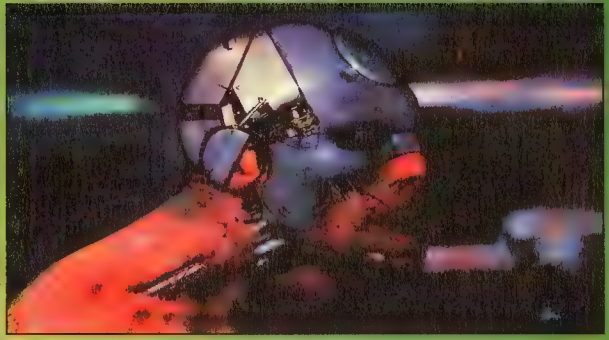
From comic book page to movie makeup design, Mean Machine is Chris Halls' baby.

All Art: Chris Halls

"After working on *Dust Devil*, I went on to *ALIEN*^{3}, and during that time, I was also doing a lot of artwork. When I wasn't working, I tried to do some painting, and the guy who invented *Judge Dredd* saw my work, and so did Dark Horse Comics. Before I knew it, two years had passed. I did a lot of work involving *Dredd*, and that's how Danny [Cannon, the film's

Though he is only 24, makeup effects designer/artist Chris Halls is already a film industry veteran.

Selected Photos and Art Courtesy Chris Halls



He joined the *Judge Dredd* art department as a conceptual illustrator, but Halls' real dream was to design the Mean Machine makeup effects.

director] saw the Mean Machine stuff I was doing for *2000 A.D.*

"The funny thing was, about six months earlier, when I heard they were doing a *Dredd* film, I thought, 'Oh, I would absolutely love to do Mean Machine!' Having drawn him as a character, I would have loved to do it as a makeup, but that never happens, where you would actually get to see a character through like that."

On the strength of his powerfully rendered artwork and larger-than-life characters, Halls was brought into the *Judge Dredd* art department as a conceptual illustrator, working under production designer Nigel Phelps (COMICS SCENE PRESENTS #1).

"I was designing everything from vehicles to bits and pieces of sets, but all the time I was plugging away for the Mean Machine job. I was pitching it right from the very beginning. I spent seven months doing artwork and paintings for the ABC robot, Mean Machine, the bikes and the helmets. I also sculpted the helmets.

"The problem with much of that artwork was that it was *very* difficult to assess how it would look in two dimensions. You literally reached a limit where you had to put it into 3-D. The bikes were like that, and Dredd's helmet was absolutely impossible. It just doesn't translate well into 3-D, so to make it look cool and still look like it did in the comics took a lot of work.

"I don't know if it's a coincidence or not, but the two elements that are true to the comics, apart from Dredd's costume, are Mean Machine and the robot. I have a lot of faith in keeping things as close as possible to their source material, and as a result, Mean Machine does not look too different from the drawings I was doing in the comic."

During pre-production on *Judge Dredd*, Halls continued to plead his case for doing the Mean Machine character makeup, and was finally allowed to submit a bid. "I was very careful, actually. I spent a lot of nights working up a budget and trying to gauge what it would cost. I knew I was up against people like Stan Winston and Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis from ADI [whom Halls had worked with on *ALIEN*^{3}], and while I knew I could do the job just as well, I didn't have their clout, so I didn't hold much hope for getting it.

"What actually happened was that Danny wanted Mean Machine in the film right from the start, but the people from America *didn't* want him, so at one point the character was actually cut from the script. I did some drawings and put in a bid that was so ridiculously low that I almost lost the job. Instead of basing my budget on x amount of technicians and overtime, I based it on the fact that I knew I could work through the night, seven days a week, to get the job done."

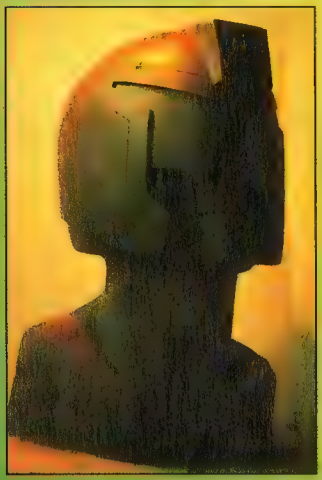
In the end, Halls' bid was accepted, and Mean Machine was his to create. "First, I took the drawings I had done, and then made a life cast of the actor, Chris Adamson. Once I had the body molds finished, I made the arm and harness, starting with the mechanical side and engineering it from the hand up to the body. I then finished the sculpting and a friend of mine made all the foam pieces for me. On set, all that was left was applying the makeup and looking after the actor."

Halls is quick to point out that his interest in designing Mean Machine

The look at Mean Machine convinced *Dredd* star Sylvester Stallone that the big cyborg should get more screen time.

Dredd Photo: Richard Blanshard/Copyright 1995 Cinergi Pictures & Cinergi Productions NV

"I knew I could work through the night, seven days a week to get the job done," says Halls, whose dedication and ability to do the project on the cheap got him the Mean Machine gig.



"To make it cool and still look like it did in the comics took a lot of work," notes Halls of Dredd's trademark helmet.

Halls is no stranger to other science fiction universes, having worked on both the *ALIEN*® movie and Dark Horse's *ALIEN* comic book series.

didn't extend to doing any other characters. "I was never trying to steal any of the makeup FX on the film," he insists. "I just wanted to do that character, so I never got too greedy and said, 'Can I do some of the other stuff?' I was just plugging for Mean Machine.

"When they finally said, 'You can have the job,' one of the first things they said to Nick [Dudman, makeup chief] was, 'This job has already been given to Chris,' so he was fine with it from the beginning. In fact, he was nothing but helpful. Obviously, I did not want to take his help, because I wanted to prove I could do it on my own, but he was always there if I needed him."

A fusion of man and mechanics, Mean Machine probably features more moving parts than the average automobile. "The main feature is the dial on his head, which is connected to a motor and gear box. Basically, the dial has four settings, so the angrier he gets, the LED in the dial flashes and turns, and then he head-butts you. That was something we originally designed to be self-contained, but Danny wanted the actors to be able to turn it themselves, so it became redundant.

"Inside the mechanical arm, he has a control box that allows him to move the hand, so he has three fingers to pick things up, but there's also a big knife on a piston that shoots out. That's what he uses to kill Judge Fargo [Max von Sydow], by running it right through him. Mechanically, it's the hand, the knife and the electronics in his head. It was rather strange how they ended up shooting him, but it was all there and self-contained if they needed it."

In order to demonstrate the work that went into the character, Halls leads the way into a small room in the FX workshop, where the disassembled

components of Mean Machine have been stored. "First, you have a fiberglass harness that the actor puts on, which has a big ring at the top. The arm is hollow with a handle inside, so we put the harness on, then put the rubber suit over the top, interlocking it with all the mechanisms.

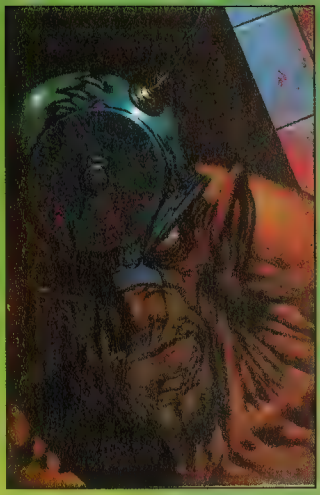
"We then put the helmet on, although this one is now completely trashed, because Stallone hit him over the head about 50 times—luckily, on the last day. The makeup is designed to butt up against the helmet, because we wanted it to look as though he has been scalped, and had this helmet put on over the top of his face.

"Once the helmet is positioned properly," Halls explains. "We then take it off and glue on the facial prosthetic, which is one piece. Finally, we clip the helmet's two halves back on, put his contact lenses in and slide the arm on. Because of its weight, we leave the arm off until we're ready to do the shot."

Like many complex prosthetic makeups, Mean Machine became easier to assemble as time went on. "On the first day we did the makeup test it took four hours, but eventually we got it down to three. I had a makeup assistant, but the problem was that I had to get up at 4:30 a.m., work all day on the set, finish at 10:30, and then work until 2 a.m. getting pieces ready for the next day. About halfway through the week, I was given an extra person to assist the guy who was already assisting me, so I could spend one day getting ready for the next day, and then we were back to two people again."

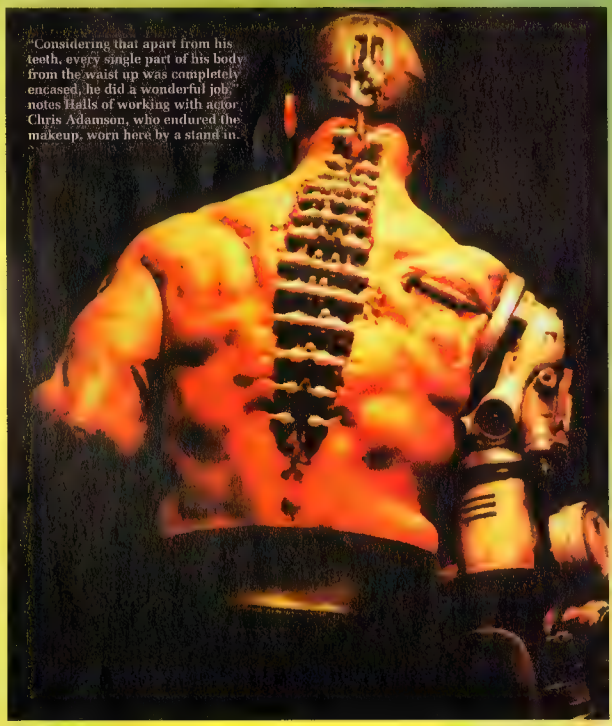
Bringing Mean Machine to life was the job of actor Adamson, who had to work in the uncomfortable makeup for up to 10 hours a day. "As far as putting up with it, he was an absolute hero. Chris always had a dour look on his face, but he never complained about anything. Considering that apart from his teeth, every single part of his body from the waist up was completely encased, he did a wonderful job.

"The only problem I had was confined to what he was allowed to eat. I had to tell him, 'You've got to be careful, because if you get any grease on the face, it's going to fall off.' I would



It was his comics work in England's *2000 A.D.* that brought Halls to the attention of *Judge Dredd* director Danny Cannon.

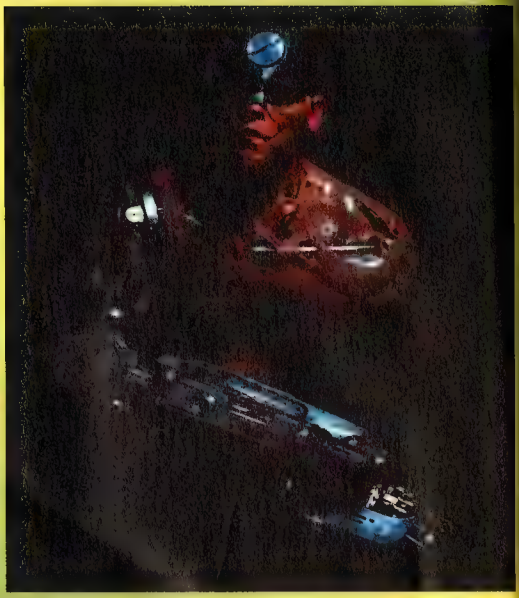
"I have a lot of faith in keeping things as close as possible to their source material," Halls maintains.



"Considering that apart from his teeth, every single part of his body from the waist up was completely encased, he did a wonderful job," notes Halls of working with actor Chris Adamson, who endured the makeup, worn here by a stand-in.

Design & Layout: Evan Metcalf

"Danny wanted Mean Machine in the film right from the start," reveals Halls.



"On the first day we did the makeup test, it took four hours, but eventually we got it down to three," reveals Halls of his elaborate makeup.

go away for five minutes, and he would be stuffing a steak sandwich into his mouth. It was difficult to explain to Chris that if he didn't listen to what I was telling him, he was making his own life difficult. He hated being fiddled with, but I would say, 'If you keep eating steak sandwiches, I have to keep repairing your makeup.' Sometimes all the actor sees is that they're being deprived of their meal."

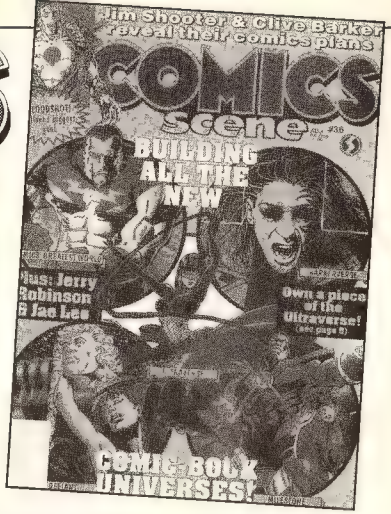
As for feedback on the character, Halls notes that the response from cast and crew was largely positive. "I think they were very happy with it. Danny didn't do much more than thank me, but that was worthwhile. At the day's end, it is a guy in a rubber suit, but hopefully the people who like *Judge Dredd* will be pleased to see Mean Machine in the film, and quite true to the comic.

"I suppose the best compliment for Mean Machine was that he was originally going to be on the set for just two days. That went up to four days, and when Stallone saw him in the makeup test, he said, 'We've got to do more with him,' so they went back and choreographed a big fight sequence. Now there's a big showdown between Dredd and Mean Machine."

After doing some promotional artwork for *Judge Dredd,* including some early designs for the movie poster, Halls is moving on to another genre project with enormous potential. As with his work on *Dredd,* the talented artist isn't going to be satisfied until he gets to do more. "I'm going to work for Stanley Kubrick, doing designs for *A.I.,*" he reveals. "When they first spoke to me, they wanted me just to do some design work, but I said, 'Look, I would be really interested in doing some R&D for the FX.' Once again, I'm hoping to prove that I can do more than they hired me for." If Mean Machine is anything to go by, moviegoers should be hearing much more from Chris Halls in the not-too-distant future.

"I spent several months doing artwork for the ABC robot, Mean Machine, the bikes and the helmets," reveals Halls.

COMICS Scene


Jim Shooter & Clive Barker reveal their comics plans
COMICS scene
BUILDING ALL THE NEW
Plus: Jerry Robinson & Jae Lee
Own a piece of the Ultraverse!
COMIC BOOK UNIVERSES!

ORDER NOW while supply lasts. Sold out: CS #1, #7.

#2 Interviews: Howard Chaykin, Chuck Jones, Chris Claremont. Denny O'Neil. *Rocketeer. Flaming Carrot. Legion.* **$5.**

#3 Interviews: *Batman* scripter Sam Hamm, Walt Simonson, Moebius, Mike Baron, Jerry Ordway. *X-Factor. Hulk* **$5.**

#4 Interviews: John Buscema, Alan Moore, Chaykin, Roy Thomas, Richard Williams. **$5.**

#5 Interviews: John Byrne, Moore 2, Williams 2, Tim Truman. *Roger Rabbit.* TV *Superboy. Wizard of Id* movie. Animated *Turtles.* **$5.**

#6 Interviews: Bob Kane, Carl Barks, Frank Miller, Mike Grell, Frank Thorne, Ann Nocenti. *JLI. Batman. Daredevil.* **$6.**

#8 Interviews: Tim Burton, Wendy Pini, Walt Simonson, Archie Goodwin, Marv Wolfman. *Punisher. Wolverine.* Rare! **$50.**

#9 Interviews: Michael Keaton, Dolph Lundgren, Clayton Moore. *Green Hornet. Batman. Punisher. Turtles.* **$5.**

#10 Interviews: Arnold Schwarzenegger, Yvonne (Batgirl) Craig. *Mr. Monster. Arkham Asylum.* TV *Beetlejuice. Faust.* **$5.**

#11 Interviews: Bill Sienkiewicz, Joe Kubert, Simon & Kirby, Kirk Alyn, George Perez. *Pogo. Little Mermaid. Captain Harlock.* **$5.**

#12 Interviews: Grant Morrison, Sienkiewicz 2, John Byrne,Tim Truman. *Ghost Rider Akira. Turtles* & *Capt. America* films. **$5.**

#13 Interviews: Mike Barr, June Foray, Art Davis, Grim Natwick. *Planet of the Apes. Turtles* & *Dick Tracy* films. *Annie II.* **$5.**

#14 Interviews: Gray Morrow, Rick Veitch, Richard Corben, Max Allan Collins, Simon & Kirby. **$5.**

#15 Interviews: Dave Gibbons, Joe Simon, Steve Gerber, Van Williams, Warren Beatty. *Terminator. Tiny Toons.* **$5.**

#16 Interviews: Alan Grant, Harvey Kurtzman, P. Craig Russell. *Simpsons.* TV *Flash.* Lost *Dick Tracy* pilot. *Fantasia.* **$5.**

#17 Interviews: Frank Miller, Grant 2, Chris Claremont, Denys Cowan. *Omaha. Simpsons. X-Men.* **$5.**

#18 Interviews: Neil Gaiman, Dave Stevens, John Wesley Shipp. *Indiana Jones. Magnus. Wild Cards. Rocketeer. Akira* **$5.**

#19 Interviews: Jim Starlin, John Byrne, Dave McKean, Jean VanderPyl. *Rocketeer. Spider. Tiny Toons.* **$6.**

#20 Interviews: Jim Shooter, Bill Campbell, Fabian Nicieza. *Viking Prince. X-Force. Magnus.* **$6.**

#21 Interviews: Jim Lee, Norm Breyfogle, William Gaines, Bob Burden, Marc Davis, Janet Waldo. *Batman. X-Men. Rocketeer.* **$6.**

#22 Interviews: Whilce Portacio, Dan Jurgens, Geof Darrow, Marv Wolfman, Ben Dunn. *Darkwing Duck. Tazmania. Beauty & the Beast. Tintin.* **$6.**

#23 Interviews: Sam Kieth, Mark Wheatley, Arnold Drake. *Doc Savage. Aquaman. Addams Family* movie. *TMNT. B&B.* **$6.**

#24 Interviews: Marv Wolfman, Mark Bode, Bob Layton. *X-O Manowar. Punisher. The Ray. Addams Family. B&B.* **$10.**

#25 Interviews: Rob Liefeld, Erik Larsen, John Bolton, Mark Texeira, Tom Veitch. *Ultraman. Spidey. Luke Cage. Crow. B&B.* **$6.**

#26 Interviews: Kevin Maguire, Neil Gaiman, Don Simpson, Simon Bisley & Alan Grant. *Justice League. Judge Dredd. B&B.* **$6.**

#27 Interviews: Todd McFarlane Neal Adams, Bob Kane, Jim Starlin, Mark Schultz, Fabian Nicieza, Mike Peters. *Batman Returns. Spawn. Nomad.* **$6.**

#28 Interviews: Lester (*Doc Savage*) Dent, Grant Morrison, Erik Larsen, Nancy Collins. *Batman Returns. Dragon. Ren & Stimpy.* **$6.**

#29 Interviews: Jim Valentino, Marc Silvestri, Michael Keaton, Los Bros. Hernandez, Kelley Jones. Animated *Batman.* **$10.**

#30 Interviews: Alan Davis, Jim Lee, Peter David, Whilce Portacio, Frank Miller, Walt Simonson, David Michelinie. *Aladdin.* **$7.**

#31 Interviews: Jerry Ordway, Al Gordon, Steven Grant, Larry Marder, Peter Bagge, *Aladdin.* Animated *Batman.* **$10.**

#32 Interviews: John Romita, Joe Quesada. *Counterparts. Legionnaires. Turtles III.* Animated *Batman* **$7.**

#33 Interviews: John Ostrander, Larry Stroman, Robert Townsend, Romita 2. *Ziggy. The Dark.* **$7.**

#34 Interviews: Mike Carlin, Jim Lee, Jack Kirby, Joe Kubert, Jamie Delano, Mike Baron. *FF* film. **$7.**

#35 Interviews: Jerry Robinson, Mike Grell, Will Elder, Scott Lobdell, William Gaines. *Elfquest. Dennis the Menace.* **$7.**

#36 Interviews: Clive Barker, Jim Shooter, Robinson 2. *Bloodshot. Comics' Greatest World. Ultraverse. Milestone.* **$7.**

#37 Interviews: Chris Claremont, Brandon Lee, Don Heck. *Avengers. Catwoman. Donna Matrix.* **$7.**

#38 Interviews: Gil Kane, Heck 2, Steve Gerber, Brandon Peterson. *X-Men 2099.* **$7.**

#39 Interviews: Jeff Smith, Mike Barr. *Marvels. Legacy.* **$7.**

#40 Animated *Batman* movie. **$7.**

#41 February '94. **$7.**

#42 March. **$7.** **#43** April. **$7.**

#44 May. **$7.** **#45** June. **$7.**

#46 July. **$7.** **#47** August. **$7.**

#48 October. **$7.** **#49** December. **$7.**

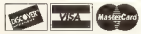
#50 February. **$7.**

Please send these **Comic Scene** back issues

#____price____#____price
#____price____#____price____
#____price____#____price

Postage $_____

Total Enclosed $_____



STARLOG PRESS
475 Park Ave South
New York, NY 10016

Send cash, check or money order!

Method of Payment
❑ Cash ❑ Check
❑ Money Order
❑ Visa
❑ MasterCard
❑ Discover

If you don't want to cut out coupon, we will accept written orders Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery

Account Number

Card Expiration Date: ____/____ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone Number (____) _____

Print name as it appears in your card

Street

City State Zip

Your Signature

POSTAGE & HANDLING:
1 magazine add $2 P & H
2-5 magazines add $3 P & H
6 or more add $5 P & H

FOREIGN POSTAGE:
For all countries other than U S , Canada and Mexico, above rates DON'T apply
Printed Matter Air Mail
Add $4 per magazine
New York state residents must add sales tax.
Canadian residents add 10% sales tax

Seasons in Hell

As the* Sandman *saga ends, Neil Gaiman ponders making art that can change your life.

By AARON VANEK

The emotions are the same as relating into the station after a long roller coaster ride. *Sandman*, Vertigo's best-selling title in the last loop-de-loop before the car stops and all the riders depart.

Neil Gaiman, after seven years penning the third-best-selling series at the DC Universe winning countless awards including many international accolades, is "beginning times to close for once Gaiman can't think of the one right word to describe how he feels. There's a list of adjectives and they're all true, that go from incredibly delighted to incredibly regretful to nervous and exhilarated. I'm really looking forward to it being over. And I really hate the idea of it being over."

He starts with a different pull-quote however. Back in 1988 – I'm right in the beginning, I'm at 12 issues," he says. "I figured I would write my eight issues and by the time I got to *Sandman* #8 the powers that be would come out to me and say, 'Wet Dark Ages very much your thing, most team of success, but it's not selling.' By the time we got to issue #8 it became very important that there was more. At that point I really did sit down and say, 'OK, this is a big story. Let's take it to the end.' I pitched it very, very loosely to the rest of somebody saying, 'I'm Los Angeles and saying, 'I'm not. I go to New York and I want to stop off in Chicago on the way.' It was a very broad thing."

So broad in fact that *Sandman* allowed Gaiman to try different things out as a writer from issue and to stories like "A Midsummer Night's

Dream" to nostalgic Americana pieces ("The Golden Boy") to epic quests ("The Kindly Ones"). Through it all, Gaiman managed to adhere to his technique. "*Sandman* has a very specific writing style, which is, and always has been, anything that works. With other projects, I will normally pick a style first. Or I will write it a little bit and find out what the style is. With *Sandman*, I will do whatever works, like throwing mud at a wall. Any mud that sticks I will throw."

He refuses, however, to throw the same mud twice, even to please an audience. "I think *Sandman* would probably be much better loved if I were willing to repeat what I had done before. When I got to *Sandman* #8, I took stock, and I said, 'Well, the most popular thing we've done so far is *Sandman* #4, the "going to hell" [illegible] body loved the 'going to hell' issue. I had this storyline called 'Season of Mists' in mind. I thought I would rather do that now, and make [illegible]ly happy.

From The Sandman series of the DC Universe. Until tomorrow has completed The Sandman's Quest, as the tale comes to a close, he visits The Kindly Ones.

Sandman Art & Characters ™ & Copyright 1988-1995 DC Comics, Inc.

[illegible] years of them. I don't like the idea of [illegible] and lots of comics that repeat like [illegible] are on sale. What I would like to see is more people coming in and doing it well."

Whether others do it well or not, the shape of comics has altered from when Gaiman started. "It's surprising to [illegible] good and bad talk in the

media. Things are definitely changing. Grant Morrison owns his copyright to The Invisibles. Chris Claremont holds the copyright to Sovereign Seven and [illegible] with the DC Universe. There are things that I don't [illegible] have happened. Alan Moore makes no [illegible] and [illegible] I have to admit, I think that's [illegible]

D'YOU KNOW WHO THE [illegible] OF THE AESIR IS, EH? I'LL TELL YOU. IT'S MR. G'RIGHT.
NO! NOBODY ALIVE OVER HERE! AND STOP LYING!
D'YOU WANT TO PLAY WITH MY MANACLES, EH, MISS PIGGY-HEAD? IT'S CALLED MJOLLNIR. IF I RAISE IT, IT GETS BIGGER. 'N' TRUE.

Sandman #11 © 1990 DC Comics, Inc.

AND LOCKED HER IN THE TOPMOST ROOM, WHICH HE HAD PREPARED FOR HER.
HIS FIRST ACTION WAS TO RAPE HER, NERVOUSLY, ON THE LUMPY OLD CAMP BED.
SHE'S NOT EVEN HUMAN, HE TOLD HIMSELF. SHE'S THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD. BUT HER FLESH WAS WARM, AND HER BREATH WAS SWEET, AND SHE CHOKED BACK TEARS LIKE A CHILD WHENEVER HE HURT HER.

"Over the years, Gaiman has let his mind lead him down the storytelling path. 'I don't think I ever did anything to shock.'"

would never have happened without you." And the same when say, "My ex-girl friend got me into Sandman, now she's married to somebody else. I'm heartbroken, but it's through Sandman that I met my new girl friend and we're about to be married next week." And the ones who use Sandman to get them through periods of hell. That's really nice," Gaiman says. "It's lovely, and I'm always very appreciative when I hear it. But I also know that it has nothing to do with me.

"What I did was write the stories and send them out. At that point, it is no longer the author's. They've done the equivalent of sending the world a postcard. What matters the postcard and what they do with it is none of your affair, you just sent the postcard. You clearly can't take responsibility for everybody who reads. There are one-in-a-million of Sandman being tonight a month and passed around, and they're going to be changing people's lives. Sandman is, for better or worse. Read this it will change your life' nonsense. It wasn't written to be

LOVE TAKES HOSTAGES. IT GETS INSIDE YOU. IT EATS YOU OUT AND LEAVES YOU CRYING IN THE
VERY PERCEPTIVE! TURNS INTO A GLASS SPLINTER

"Sandman is, for better or worse, 'Read this, it will change your life' Sandman. It wasn't written to be," says Gaiman. "But for a lot of readers, it is."

GAGK!
TEN BILLION YEARS I'VE SPENT IN THIS PLACE. THAT'S A LONG TIME...
...AND WE'VE ALL CHANGED, SINCE THE BEGINNING.
EVEN YOU, DREAM LORD, YOU WERE VERY DIFFERENT BACK THEN.

don't probably try [illegible]. At the time, I was very proud of it. I thought, Gosh, look, here is the first real fashion in comics. Here is the first moment of [illegible]. I look at comics now in which there are clusters of [illegible] for no particular reason, all running around and carrying [illegible] and I don't really [illegible]. The point is, you follow the story wherever it will go, wherever the story is going, and you see it go there. I don't think I ever did anything to shock. I would sometimes do things because [illegible] was where the story was whether it was pulling a second head out of a pile, or giving an insane story arc in a very [illegible] sensible fashion now. It [illegible] very different [illegible] matter to [illegible]."

Beyond subject matter, however, [illegible] Gaiman's [illegible] work [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] Sandman [illegible] has had, and will continue to have, an impact on the reading public. "I received letters from people saying, 'Sandman got me through the death of my best friend,' or 'I was in prison, I was [illegible] Sandman, I felt [illegible] I suppose it is the Punk [illegible] the idea that I've been [illegible] from college, and it's [illegible] connection to [illegible] and my life

[illegible] through the "prologue hell" from [illegible] my own as we're [illegible] Gaiman wanted until issue #50 to begin his "Season of the Mists" saga.

"I think those are about three issues of 'Sandman' that I'm actually happy with," Gaiman relates. (Out of Shade—"A Midsummer Night's Dream"—were Issue 8 Origin.

[illegible] and then at self-storage years later for investors, but for a run of five issues, it is—and for years to come, it will be—[illegible]."

Gaiman's enthusiasm of the project stems from the very [illegible] opinion of his young [illegible] to play Shakespeare in Acts & #III. "I think those are about three issues of 'Sandman' that I'm actually happy with. I love what Charles [illegible] like was a Midsummer Night's Dream's Shade [illegible] for [illegible] I'm happy with [illegible] #19 was really [illegible] and I'm very satisfied with it and what [illegible] to be. I think I would [illegible] that issue [illegible] Barbara Kesel [illegible] Shakespeare-in-the-[illegible] Shakespeare-in-other-books' issue. I hated watching Craig Russell come in. It was a [illegible] I have done but, I suppose, [illegible]."

Despite [illegible] with the work, Gaiman still [illegible] [illegible] but without [illegible]. "I don't feel the need to [illegible] Shakespeare. I would have to learn to [illegible] myself to [illegible] more or less my [illegible] to us [illegible] and the [illegible] that I [illegible] back and say, 'Oh, he's one [illegible] & the second [illegible]' I don't [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] years you see [illegible] Gaiman has explored many of [illegible] talents, as well. An interesting character is the "A Game of You" [illegible]

I'M KAREN
AHUH. SO WHAT'RE YOU? A BOY OR A GAL?
I'M... I WAS BORN A GUY. AND NOW I'M A GAL. ONLY I HAVEN'T GONE ALL THE WAY...
WELL, MY GRANDMOM, WELL, WAS LIKE YOU. HE WAS A CUTE LITTLE THING. HE'D SASHAY AROUND SWEET AS ANYTHIN', HE WAS SAVIN' UP FER THE OPERATION.
HIS MAW USED TO SAY HE WAS THE DAUGHTER SHE'D NEVER HAD.

Art: Duncan Eagleson

Sandman #14 marks a landmark in comics—the making of a writer simply because the writer wishes it.

want to do that. I want to keep moving. I don't ever see myself leaving comics entirely. It's too delightful a medium, and has such a multitude that I would like to play around with different things."

Some of these things include Fantagio Comedia Lounge, a spoken-word double CD which stalks and has encounters of famous working women of the silver screen like Carmen Miranda, Judy Garland, Mae West and Tallulah Bankhead, mixed in the audio cut-band like Flash Gitz, and both are out there, with Fragrant Cotton collaborator Dave McKean. Between Cinema Savagery, a surrealist, confusion from Dreamhaven Books by 2000.

In the movie field, Gaiman is re-teaming with "A Midsummer Night's Dream" actor Charles Vess for Stardust, a return to the realm of Faerie. The tale, an illustrated novel is being published by DC's Vertigo imprint, concerns a Faerie Prince Self-Aware's search for a falling star.

Another project in the works is for British TV series storytellers, being developed for the BBC. The series focuses on a rather bland chap named Richard Mayhew, who happens on Neverwhere, a young mad-lib girl with the power to open doors—lots of doors. Of course, nothing is ever the same for Richard after Door Collector Lamia, the Neverwhere representative/stalker, comes to the real world to drag him back to Neverwhere. He and a bunch of new friends, ranging from serial murderers to sewer-dwelling people, in a quest for a couple of doors and they must through and meet extraordinary episodes and, yes and then, which was interesting. I haven't seen them, heard the finished, I heard which was I thought worked out fairly, interestingly the guy from the BBC was interviewed. We have to cut out this thing and Neverwhere would, there's just way to use them in it." Gaiman and "Neverwhere" is the most public failure you'll ever meet. "And then we started the things and Neverwhere stuff which is some of the funniest, darkest stuff you've seen, he said. "Search for Lamia—Neverwhere, just get more in. What was great about that was that I got to laugh at my own jokes. They weren't quite as funny when I was writing them, but I was laughing at them. I'm writing them there."

"I'm really looking forward to it being over. And I really hope that idea of it being over—it never comes as far as it's the door in The Sandman is no longer

ing along with everyone else. That was wonderful. There is a genuine buzz for me."

That rare "buzz" he feels is not common, unfortunately. As Neil Gaiman continues crafting complex and powerful stories in any medium, the one tragedy that will *never* have a happy ending lies in the fact that he cannot enjoy his creations as much as the public. "George Harrison was asked about the Beatles, and he said [in a believable Liverpudlian accent], 'You have to understand that we're the only people in the 1960s who never even heard the Beatles; we're the only people in the 1960s for whom Beatlemania never happened.' It's true. It *didn't* happen for them.

"What did *Sandman* do to me? I

to the next page. For me, it's a comic

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

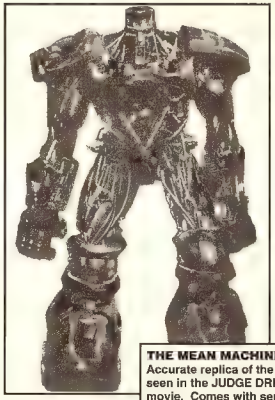
SCIENCE FICTION MODEL KITS

Superbly-detailed figures!

CTHULHU From the mind of H.P. Lovecraft comes one of the greatest horrors of our time. Already popular as a role-playing game and computer game, now available in a soft vinyl model kit. $64.95

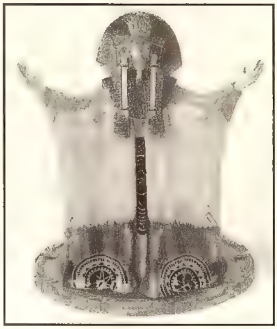
ZEN, THE INTERGALACTIC NINJA Requires only minimal trimming. Easy assembly is ideal for beginning modelers. Colors match character's color scheme. Metal staff is lead free. 1/6 scale, soft vinyl. $39.95

JUDGE DREDD ©1995 Cinergi Pictures Entertainment Inc. and Cinergi Productions N.V. Inc. All Rights Reserved. JUDGE DREDD TM & © 1995 Egmont Foundation. All Rights Reserved STARGATE TM & © 1994 Le Studio Canal+ (U.S.). All Rights Reserved. TM designates a trademark of Le Studio Canal+ (U.S.)

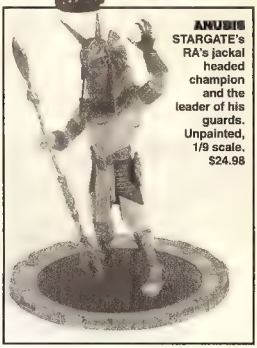


THE MEAN MACHINE ANGEL Accurate replica of the character seen in the JUDGE DREDD movie. Comes with semi-circular base. 1/9 scale. $24.98

JUDGE DREDD: THE ULTIMATE LAWMAN A stunning plastic model kit. Figure bears the likeness of Sylvester Stallone, star of the blockbuster film. Comes with semi-circular base. 1/9 scale. $24.98



RA STARGATE's Absolute Ruler of Abydos. Meticulously detailed. Base is replica of the Stargate with constellation artwork. Over 9" tall, unpainted, 1/9 scale. $24.98



ANUBIS STARGATE's RA's jackal headed champion and the leader of his guards. Unpainted, 1/9 scale. $24.98

SCIENCE FICTION MODEL KITS

Please indicate quantity being ordered, and add postal and handling charges as listed. New York State residents add 8 1/4% sales tax. Sorry, we cannot ship to post office boxes, nor can we process foreign orders.

___Judge Dredd **$24.98 + $5.50**
___Mean Machine Angel **$24.98 + $5.50**
___Ra **$24.98 + $5.50**
___Anubis **$24.98 + $5.50**
___Zen **$39.95 + $5**
___Cthulhu **$64.95 + $5**

Method of Payment:
❑ Cash ❑ Check ❑ Money Order
❑ Discover ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa

_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
Account No.

Card Expiration Date:___/___ (Mo./Yr.)
Your Daytime Phone #:(_____)_____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

City State Zip

Your Signature Total enclosed: $ _____

Send cash, check or money order to:
STARLOG GROUP, Inc.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS.
Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

If spine-chilling, blood-curdling horror is your idea of fun,

then...

ONLY $14.99

is a

MUST HAVE!

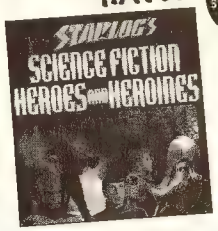
Welcome to the horror hit parade! In these blood soaked pages, you'll delve into the world of dark entertainment Read first-person interviews with actors, directors and special FX people. Learn how those state-of-the-art effects are actually done. Whether it's *Freddy Krueger, Jason, Pinhead,* or *Dracula* (just to name a few) who strikes terror in your heart, you're sure to enjoy this collectible. 144 pages filled with full-color photos from some of the scariest movies ever made. Edited by Anthony Timpone, editor of *Fangoria* magazine. 9 x 12.

CAN. $20.98 **ISBN: 0-517-10013-4**

Or, if your favorite Stars beckon you to uncharted realms of time & space then you...

GOTTA HAVE!

ONLY $14.99



Travel through time with the characters in this incredible book They're all here, from classics like *King Kong* and *Lost in Space* to *Star Wars, Star Trek* and *Jurassic Park.* Catch the scoop from the stars who have become the Heroes and Heroines—Spock and Data, Princess Leia, Ripley, Mad Max, Dana Scully... A thrilling illustrated (more than 100 full-color photos) journey through 96 pages of inside information. A great behind-the-scenes look at SF film making and all those FX. Edited by David McDonnell, editor of *Starlog* magazine. 9 x 12.

CAN. $20.98 **ISBN: 0-517-11950-1**

ORDER NOW!

1-800-793-2665

Refer to ISBN #'s when ordering

Visa, MasterCard, AmEx accepted

Or send check or money order for $14.99 (plus sales tax where applicable) (plus $4.00 shipping and handling, $1.00 for each additional copy) —U.S. currency only. To: Random House Inc., Order Dept., 400 Hahn Road Westminster, MD 21157 • 10-day money-back guarantee if not satisfied

from Random House Value Publishing, Inc.

Liefeld

(continued from page 32)

COMICS SCENE and STARLOG have always been around, and to me, they're informative magazines, *not* magazines that try to drive the market. But other magazines with 'Hot Lists' and all that other crap—and I can say this, I was never #1, I was #2 for a brief period, but #3 is where I parked at, and I had a good life being #3! I *always* used to tell people that I'm the best #3 that ever lived. I enjoyed that, and I knew that ride would eventually end as I stopped being a penciller and became more of a publisher, editor, and TV and movie producer. And those aren't just titles—each of them requires a great deal of work.

"These magazines *anoint* these artists. Stephen Platt shot out of nowhere onto these lists. I always told Stephen, 'You're not working for me because you're on a stupid list. You do good work, and I see great potential in your storytelling.' It really bothers me that this new age of creators look to those lists—and they do! I work with enough 18-year-olds to know. All they want to do is be on the Hot List. I just encourage them to do good work. Fans will find your work and like it, even if it may never be reflected on these ridiculous lists. Maybe there's some payola going on here, or there are a bunch of people who are angry that they didn't find work in the comics industry, and they can manipulate it. It's fun to see that many recent success stories have been books that the Hot Lists have discovered late—they've jumped on the bandwagon after they were already successful.

"I've always maintained that my love is drawing and creating comics, and I still do that for my pleasure and for my sanity. If all I had to do all day was deal with people on the phone without being able to execute my dream on paper, that wouldn't interest me. So, I can come at this with a lot of success in my field, and still enjoy tremendous success in other areas.

"The industry is so topsy-turvy. It's being run by all the wrong people now. The creative community can't come together because of egos," says Liefeld. "I've had several hot books at different points, and things come and go. Situations change, and you have to ride the storm—and sometimes the storm is pretty damned hectic. I consider myself pretty lucky that Image Comics and I have survived the storm until now. The last 12 months have been pretty nasty. The two major publishers and their deep pockets tried to shake the trees pretty hard and rub everybody out, from co-ops to kickbacks and distribution. If the creative community could stand together and unite, we would call the shots! But egos keep tripping us up, and it's really sad."

Liefeld has also started his own imprint independent of Extreme Studios and Image Comics. Maximum Press is publishing comic books outside the usual scope of Image, including *Battlestar Galactica* (STARLOG #220) and *Avengelyne.* "We're also doing a new book called *Cybrid,* which fits in with Maximum Press because it's so different," he says. "I don't know what you would call it. It's a science-fiction thriller. We have more *Avengelyne* stuff coming, and Alan Moore's *Warchild.*

"I don't pencil a whole lot anymore —that takes a lot of my time, and it has to be the right project for me to do that," says Liefeld, noting that the "right project" has come along thanks to Alan Moore. "*Warchild* is going to get me back at the drawing board. Alan has written an incredible Warchild story. I know I'm creating some expectations by saying this, but you haven't seen anything like this since *Watchmen.* This is out there! Alan called me up and I taped the conversation as he pitched me Warchild for an hour-and-a-half. He kept saying, 'You know, Rob, I want to do this Quentin Tarantino/sword and sorcery/kickass gangster comic,' and you have no idea what that entails! I thought I knew what he meant, with quick cuts and the way it was shot, but this is *so* out there! It is so rich! I played Larry Marder the tape of Alan telling the story, and his jaw dropped! There's no comic I've *ever* read that even comes close to resembling this. I'm putting my nose to the grindstone on that project after getting back from my wedding [in July]."

Despite the challenge of overseeing so many books and the instability of the marketplace, the one-time *wunderkind* of the industry says he has never had more fun in comics than he is now.

"I'm having a ball," says Rob Liefeld. "Early on, I had more enthusiasm than execution, and I learned a lot of tough, hard lessons. People can tell you things all day long, but we learn the most by making those mistakes ourselves. I've learned from every mistake I've ever made. We've had nothing but great success since January—we've got our legs back and we're finally executing. People are coming back to our books, we're attracting new readers and our core readers are quite pleased. We've learned to plan ahead, and I actually feel like everything is working."

DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY

COMICS Scene®

America's hottest comics publication presents amazing previews of new comics and in-depth interviews with their incredible creators! Complete coverage of animation, plus the latest comics movies and TV shows!

COMICS SCENE now offers you two great subscription deals. Which one is right for you?

DEAL #1
A Nine-Issue Subscription. PLUS, if you order today, you will receive a FREE COLLECTIBLE *COMICS SCENE* BACK ISSUE! You pay only $29.99, saving $14.56 off the newsstand price—and that doesn't include the cost of the FREE COLLECTIBLE BACK ISSUE. What a deal!

DEAL #2
A Six-Issue Subscription Offer. You pay only $19.99, save $9.71 off the newsstand price!

COMICS SCENE is now published six times a year. Whether you choose Deal #1 or Deal #2, you will enjoy the incredible convenience of having America's most exciting comics publication delivered to your home—and you will SAVE MONEY!!

COMICS SCENE subscriptions are a great gift idea!

COMICS Scene® Subscription

Mark the Subscription Offer that is right for you.

_NINE ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION (USA) $29.99
_NINE ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION (Foreign) $38.99 (US funds only)
_When ordering a Nine-Issue subscription, check here to receive your Free Collectible Back Issue.

___SIX-ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION (USA) $19.99
___SIX-ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION (FOREIGN) $25.99 (US funds only)

DISCOVER VISA MasterCard

Method of Payment:
❑Cash ❑Check ❑Money Order
❑Discover ❑MasterCard ❑Visa

_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
Account No.

Card Expiration Date:___/___ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone #: (_____)_____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

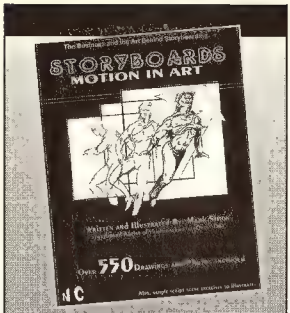
City State Zip

Your Signature

Total enclosed: $_____

Send cash, check or money order to:
STARLOG COMM INT'L, INC.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS.
Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.



STORYBOARDS
Motion in Art
$24.95

Written & illustrated by
Mark Simon, Storyboard Artist of
the TV Series "seaQuest DSV"

If you like to draw, you can make good money illustrating for film, TV, animation, commercials, computer games and more! This book will tell you how!

Topics include:
Drawing Better Boards
Computers in Storyboarding
What Producers Look For
How to Present Your Work

172 pg. Dozens of illustrations
Spiral bound.

STORYBOARDS
$24.95

___Quantity being ordered.

POSTAGE & HANDLING: NORTH AMERICA: $5.50/book, OVERSEAS. $10.50/book New York State residents add 8 1/4% sales tax Canadian residents add 10% sales tax.

Method of Payment:
❑Cash ❑Check ❑Money Order
❑Discover ❑MasterCard ❑Visa

_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

Account No.

Card Expiration Date:___/___ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone #:(___)_____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

City State Zip

Your Signature

Total enclosed: $_____

Send cash, check or money order to.

STARLOG GROUP, INC.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

Rook

(continued from page 43)

comic in ages. I look at the pages and say, 'Wow!' and I try to pump up the volume a little bit myself in the next script."

In addition to his work on *The Rook*, Sniegoski has a number of other irons in the fire, including more stories for the Harris group flagship's horror heroine. "I'll be continuing the regular monthly *Vengeance of Vampirella* series, as well as *The Rook*, and I'll probably be doing quite a few issues of the new bi-monthly *Vampirella Strikes*. I'll also be doing several two and three-issue miniseries that focus on particular characters within the *Vampirella* Universe, or new characters from the old days of Warren, which we're attempting to revive and revamp. I've got a lot going on right now."

As for *The Rook*, Tom Sniegoski hopes comic buyers will enjoy his revival of Warren's once-overlooked, time-hopping hero. "The major element that would interest me as a comic book reader is, since this is such a visual medium, the artwork is some of the most beautiful I've seen in years. If I had to compare it to something, I would compare it to the John Totleben and Steve Bissette *Swamp Things*, which I felt were some of the finest horror comics ever produced. That's what I'm reminded of when I see Kirk's pages. Comics didn't look like that then, and they really took horror comics to a new level.

"I think people are really going to be impressed by the grotesque beauty of Kirk's artwork. It really grabs you, so if somebody does plunk down their money, or are deciding whether they should buy it, they're going to find a very unique character. He's very much unlike any character that exists right now. He's torn, he's trying to figure out what his destiny is, and what he can do right now. This is *not* what he wanted for himself, to be joined with this piece of living chaos, and he's having a really tough time with it. He has gone from being a light, jovial, time-jumping good guy to someone who's very dark and brooding.

"As far as the stories are concerned, I don't think anybody will be able to predict where this comic is going to go. When somebody sits down to read issue #3 and says, 'OK, I've got it now,' we're going to pull the rug right out from underneath them so they'll say, 'I didn't expect that!' We want people to keep guessing, we want to keep them excited and we want them to come back from month to month, and I think we're going to do that."

Runaway

(continued from page 47)

Beihold and head of cleanup Dan Tanaka.

Also, Bailey notes that artistic coordinator, Dave Bossert, "crammed the movie through in the last couple of months. If it wasn't for him, it would not have gotten done, because we would have had *no* FX. He pretty much did it all in the last minute and saved our behinds."

With "Runaway Brain," Bailey reveals, "There was *no* script. We sold the idea to Jeffrey Katzenberg, and we just went right into storyboarding it. Then, we stuck pieces of dialogue right underneath [each panel]."

This, of course, was the method of storymaking used in the Golden Age of cartoons, a method championed by modern-day cartoonists such as John Kricfalusi. "It's the *right* way of doing cartoons," Bailey asserts. "I firmly believe that. Not that writers aren't necessary. I actually had several people come in and do a dialogue pass or punch dialogue, but they didn't write the cartoon."

Bailey gives the story credit for "Brain" to Kurasawa. "If you were to look at the storyboard that actually went into production, I would say 90 percent of the drawings were his. It was also the ideas. So, he would be the writer." The film credits the story as based on an idea by Tim Hauser.

The director points out, "If you look over the whole history of cartoons, the great work was mostly done by people who drew the storyboards, who wrote them through drawings. While I don't go as extreme as John, who would say, 'Writers are no damn good; you have to throw them out into the street,' I think the argument follows overwhelmingly in his favor when you just look at the body of work.

"I can't believe the letters that come up through *Animation Magazine* and COMICS SCENE about people saying how great cartoon writers are. When I look back at *my* favorite cartoon films, they were all made by cartoonists. If they were OK or were not good, they were the ones that have been made in the TV system.

"In TV cartoons, the writers control way too much. You cannot cut a line out of a script to make something flow better without the writer's approval. I don't see how a director could sit in an editing bay and work on his cartoon if he had to worry about not being able to pull line out or move something around. That's insane. The director *shouldn't* have to work for the writer; in animation, the writer should work for the director."

Subscribe For The Premiere Season!

STAR TREK VOYAGER™

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

The spectacular new STAR TREK adventure!
STAR TREK VOYAGER
#1
PREMIERE COLLECTOR'S EDITION
Co-Creator Rick Berman unveils the world of STAR TREK: VOYAGER
"The Caretaker" Behind the scenes of the first mission
Designing the VOYAGER Universe
Venture beyond the final frontier with Captain Kathryn Janeway & crew!
ALL-NEW ALIENS!
NEW ADVENTURES!
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

Join us for a very special event— the beginning of a new chapter in the ongoing STAR TREK saga!

The new STAR TREK television series chronicles the adventures of the *U.S.S. Voyager* which finds itself in a distant part of the galaxy along with a former enemy, the Maquis. Together, they must find the way back to Federation space.

Starring Kate Mulgrew as Captain Kathryn Janeway of the *U.S.S. Voyager*.

Premiere Season Subscription
6 Issues — $30

$37 Value for Only $30

Subscribing is like receiving one issue free—plus you have the added convenience of receiving your copies in advance of newsstand delivery. AND your magazines are mailed in protective envelopes directly to your home.

For subscribers Only!

All premiere copies mailed to subscribers will carry a special cover—not available on the newsstands. Don't miss out on this surefire collectible!

NEW SHIPS, NEW CHARACTERS, NEW DESIGNS, NEW DISCOVERIES!

STAR TREK: VOYAGER is a Paramount Network Television Production for the United Paramount Network.
™ & © 1995 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved. STAR TREK is a Registered Trademark of Paramount Pictures.

STAR TREK: VOYAGER

Premiere Season Subscription
6 Issues — $30 (Foreign: $40)

___Please indicate number of subscriptions being ordered. List additional addresses on separate sheet.

Method of Payment:
❑Cash ❑Check ❑Money Order
❑Discover ❑MasterCard ❑Visa

DISCOVER VISA MasterCard

_ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
Account No.

Card Expiration Date: _____/_____ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone #: (___) _____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

City State Zip

Your Signature

Total enclosed: $_____

Send cash, check or money order to:
STARLOG GROUP, Inc.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE WILL ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

CLASSIFIED

DEADLINE: For CS #55, in our office by November 1, 1995. For #56, in our office by January 3 1996. Absolutely no ads can be accepted for an issue after its deadline.
BASIC RATE: $9 per line. Limit: 48 characters per line. **Minimum: three lines.** Punctuation, symbols and spaces count as characters. **Small display ads:** $70 per column inch (Camera-ready only.)
HEADLINE: First line only—Word(s) of your choice (underline them) will be printed in **BOLD CAPS.**
CATEGORY: Indicate where your ad should be listed. Due to space limitations, COMICS SCENE reserves the right to place any ad under a category of its choosing.
PAYMENT: Cash, check or money order must accompany ad. Checks payable to Starlog Communications Int.
MAIL TO: COMICS SCENE Classified, 475 Park Avenue South, 8th Flr, New York, NY 10016
READERS, Beware! COMICS SCENE is not liable or responsible for any product or service in this section. And when ordering from anyone, be sure to print your name & full address very carefully.

CATALOGS

60 PAGE ACTION FIGURE & COLLECTIBLE TOY ILLUSTRATED CATALOG containing: Star Wars, Star Trek, Universal monsters, Chucky dolls, Freddy, Munsters, Addams Family, Nightmare Before Xmas, etc. Send $2.00 to: Figures Co., PO Box 19482CS, Johnson, RI 02919

GIANT 40 PAGE ILLUSTRATED CATALOG containing Star Wars, Star Trek, Super Heroes, G.I. Joe plus 50 other toy and gift lines from film and TV. Send $2.00 to: John DiCicco, 57 Bay View Dr. (CS), Shrewsbury, MA 01545

FREE CATALOG • FREE OFFERS !!!
SCRIPT CITY
MOVIE & TV SCRIPTS
THOUSANDS OF TITLES!
213-871-0707
8033 SUNSET BLVD. #1500-SL, HOLLYWOOD, CA 90046

MODEL KITS: Plastic/Resin/Vinyl. From/of comics, sci-fi, space, movies, figures, TV, etc. Old/new. hundreds available. Free catalog. J.F. Green Inc. 1621 W. Jacaranda, Fullerton, CA 92633 (714) 526 5467/(800) 807-4759.

AUD/VIDEO

RANA: JUNGLE Queen. A video movie! Rana must face: Sadistic Nazis! Killer Zombies! Mutated Snakes! $25. WAVE, POB 83, Deerfield, NJ 08313.

Moebius

(continued from page 39)

ties of electronic publishing. I understand that they're planning to do two discs: one would be a kind of visual encyclopedia of my work, *á là Art of Moebius*. The other would be a game using my character, Arzach.

CS: Tell us about your more recent works.

MOEBIUS: I just finished drawing *Mister Blueberry*, which is the 24th *Blueberry* graphic novel, excluding the spin-off books like *Young Blueberry*. It was very scary to do because it's the first time I've assumed full control of Blueberry since Jean-Michel's [Charlier] death. This time, I had to wear two hats: that of the writer as well as the artist. It was all very schizophrenic! I decided to start the story in 1881, about eight years after *Arizona Love*, to mark a clean break from Jean-Michel's *Blueberry*. My *Blueberry* is older, if not wiser, and is now a card shark in Tombstone. In fact, the movie *Tombstone* was a strong influence on the book. Dargaud will release the album in France towards the end of the year. I don't think we have any plans for a US edition yet. With the current turmoil in US comics distribution, it has been difficult to plan ahead.

Now, I'm going to embark on the second volume of *The Man from Ciguri*. This is a sequel to *The Airtight Garage*. About 30-plus pages ran in installments in *Cheval Noir* a few years ago. I made some changes, redrew some pages and eventually divided the story into two 50-page books. The first one will be out in France at the year's end. Dark Horse plans to release an American edition in early '96, along with reprints of *Arzach*, *Rock City* and some of my other *Heavy Metal* stories. I think *The Man from Ciguri* is among the best work I've done. I'm very excited by this series.

CS: What about your new art book, *Fusion*?

MOEBIUS: Ah, yes. It's part of a series of hardcovers which began with *Venise Celeste* and continued with *Starwatcher* and *Made in L.A.* Every five years or so, [Belgian publisher] Casterman asks me to collect all the commercial art I've done, go through my sketchbooks, etc., and we make one of these. For *Fusion*, Sylvain Desprestz, who is himself a very talented artist, helped me assemble the book. It contains some of the movie designs I did for *Willow* and *The Abyss*, as well as the Marvel posters and various advertising jobs. There's also a new comic story, drawn especially for the book. I'm particularly pleased with it because I think it contains a higher proportion of illustrations taken from my sketchbooks. Marvel/Epic did a co-publishing deal with Casterman and will release an American edition in September.

CS: Finally, why do you think comics are more respected in France than in the United States?

MOEBIUS: I've had many long discussions about this with various friends, hours-long discussions. Everyone seems to have his or her own theory, and each probably contains a kernel of truth. The only thing you can say with total objectivity is that the United States and France are two different countries! *Voila!* If a European artist wants to become better known in the States, he must do what I've done, which is to spend some time there, meeting the public, attending conventions, etc. The fact remains that even today, the American comic-book industry is a little like a band of pioneers fighting for recognition from inside their circle of wagons. Their situation is totally different from that of France, where comics are bought and read by a more mainstream segment of the population, even including university scholars. In America, scholars cross themselves when they see a comic book.

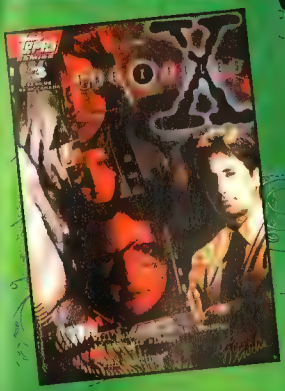
To me, the question facing American comics is, will today's young artists be able to extract themselves from their present cultural referential system—which is still primarily the superhero, basically an adolescent's power fantasy—to really express themselves in more open and mature ways? The child isn't born yet. American comics must learn to express personal, internal universes, deal with social or political themes, or truly original visions.

It is important to reach a public that doesn't let itself be trapped in genres or categories. To me, adolescents who are stuck in a single genre, like superheroes, are already old people. To be young is to be free of prejudice and preconceived ideas. However, it is also a fact of life that an artist cannot do anything unless he has a public. So what we're also looking at is a global evolution of society.

Everything seems to happen faster in the United States, but at the same time, they don't have the literary tradition that we have in France. In America, publishers seem to be very bestseller-oriented, and serious literature is quickly categorized and relegated to a small niche. There is a risk that American comics, even if they grow up, will end up being treated in the same fashion.

THE X FILES

AUTOGRAPHED COMICS



X-FILES Special #1
Complies issues 1,2 & 3. Signed by artist Charles Adlard. Limited edition of only 750. $40

X-FILES #3
Signed by writer Stefan Petrucha. Limited edition of only 500. $39.95

X-FILES Annual #1
Signed by artist Charles Adlard. Limited edition of only 2,500. (Not shown.) $29.95

X-FILES Trade Paperback
Reprints issues 1-6. Signed by artist Charles Adlard. Limited edition of only 1,750. (Not shown.) $49.95

Also available:

SUPERMAN / ALIENS #1
Signed by writer/artist Dan Jurgens. Limited edition of only 3,000.$25

STAR TREK: ASHES OF EDEN
Written by William Shatner, signed by artist Jimmy Palmiotti. Limited edition of only 500. $39.95

STAR WARS: RIVER OF CHAOS $34.95
Signed by artists June Brigman & Roy Richardson. Limited edition of only 750.$34.95

FIVE STAR SPECTACULAR PACKAGE
Includes 3 great comics: JUDGE DREDD: LEGENDS OF THE LAW #1, signed by artist Jimmy Palmiotti; JURASSIC PARK #0, signed by artist Gil Kane and TOTAL RECALL MOVIE ADAPTATION, signed by writer Elliot Maggin & artist Tom Lyle. All three for only $49.95

X-FILES
Autographed Comics

Please indicate quantity being ordered.

__X-FILES Special #1 $40
__X-FILES #3 $39.95
__X-FILES Annual #1 $29.95
__X-FILES Trade Paperback $49.95

Also available:
__SUPERMAN/ALIENS #1 $25
__STAR TREK: ASHES OF EDEN $39.95
__STAR WARS: RIVER OF CHAOS $34.95
__FIVE STAR SPECTACULAR PACKAGE $49.95

POSTAGE & HANDLING.
USA & CANADA $5.95/item. New York State residents add 8 1/4% sales tax. Canadian residents add 10% sales tax.
OVERSEAS $11/item

Method of Payment:
❑ Cash ❑ Check ❑ Money Order
❑ Discover ❑ MasterCard ❑ Visa

Account No.

Card Expiration Date:___/___ (Mo./Yr.)

Your Daytime Phone #:(_____)_____

Print Name As It Appears On Your Card

Street

City State Zip

Your Signature

Total enclosed: $_____

Send cash, check or money order to:

STARLOG GROUP INC.
475 PARK AVENUE SOUTH
NEW YORK, NY 10016

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO CUT OUT COUPON, WE ACCEPT WRITTEN ORDERS
Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery

All Swan Princess Art: Copyright 1994 Nest Productions Inc.

ANIMATION SCENE

There are all kinds of quests in animation. Here, Prince Derek battles the Great Animal in *The Swan Princess*.

The Quest for Great Animators

Drawing From Disney: There's a high demand for animation professionals these days. DreamWorks SKG and Warner Bros. have announced their animated feature projects, and are aggressively recruiting talent from art schools, union freelancers, even rival studios.

"Oh yeah, there's a scramble for talent. There's no question about it," confirms *Pocahontas* co-director Eric Goldberg. "Everybody's trying to outbid each other in trying to figure out when Disney people's contracts are up. But that doesn't mean that there's really a lot for them to do, yet. They are just trying to glom onto as many skilled people as they can get. At this moment, they *can* start to build up their ranks and increase their artistic muscle.

"As far as Disney's concerned, we have many people coming in as trainees," Goldberg says. "Disney has always brought people on and trained them. I don't think the situation is very different from what it was before, other than that there are other players in town who are trying to make working for them more attractive than working for Disney. I imagine, at least financially, that things might get a little better for animators."

Meanwhile, the world's wealthiest animation studio continues to lose its key artists to the new kids on the block.

According to Steve Hulett, business representative of the Screen Cartoonists Union Local 839, "The reason Disney is losing people is because Disney has close to 500 employees in animation [in the LA area], and they have all the experienced animators and layout people. By definition, they're going to be losing some people. But the reason they're losing them is that DreamWorks and Warner Bros. are offering these people more money, and when you offer people more money, they tend to go.

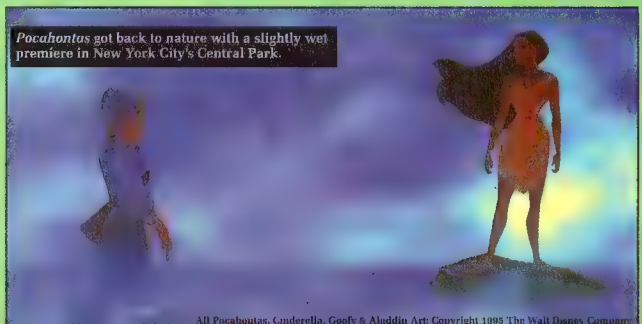
"There's one director who's going to DreamWorks because they're doubling his salary. Now, you have to be nuts not to consider an offer like that. He has done very well at Disney. They like him. They want him to stay and they're very upset that he's leaving. Other animators are in the same boat. But what are you supposed to do? It's the good ol' capitalist system."

DreamWorks is also offering its employees profit points, splitting 10 percent of the gross box office receipts after a specified break-even point. In April, though, Disney countered with a twice-a-year bonus plan, for employees who stay with them through the entire fiscal year. The new plan is based on a formula that considers box-office amounts, video sales, soundtrack sales, company tenure, studio position, contribution to current projects and merchandising. Also, at presstime, Disney remains the only studio that offers its workers a 401k retirement plan.

Turner Feature Animation—which is currently working on *Cats Don't Dance*—also has a bonus plan. "When a picture reaches a certain gross receipt plateau, all the employees at Turner Feature Animation who worked on it will get an additional two weeks' salary," Hulett says. "When it reaches the next plateau, they get an additional two weeks' salary. And so on. That's considerably less generous than Disney's current plan, because Disney has had blockbusters for five or six years. We'll see where it goes."

In addition to higher salaries, bonuses and perks, Hulett says artists are attracted by the project itself, and the opportunity for faster advancement in the ranks. "You can always rise up faster at a new studio," he says, "because nothing is ossified.

"Basically, a good contingent from Disney are interested in working with Jeffrey Katzenberg again. There are probably 15 in the core group. He's going to have Duncan Marjoribanks [*Pocahontas* supervising animator, Governor Ratcliffe], Tom Sito [head of story, *Pocahontas* and co-director of *Fantasia Continued*], Gary Perkovac [*Pocahontas* animator, also supervising animator of Lord Rogers in Rich



Pocahontas got back to nature with a slightly wet premiere in New York City's Central Park.

All Pocahontas, Cinderella, Goofy & Aladdin Art: Copyright 1995 The Walt Disney Company

Entertainment's *The Swan Princess*], and Don Paul [FX supervisor for *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas*]." These five artists announced their defection to DreamWorks the same week in May. Hulett also names Brenda Chapman (head of story, *The Lion King* and now co-director of DreamWork's *Prince of Egypt*), and Lorna Pomeroy Cook (story sketch, *The Legend of Mulan*). Background artists include Barry Atkinson (*Pocahontas*) and Kathy Altieri (*The Lion King*).

Joining DreamWorks from Walt Disney TV Animation is Rob Hummel, who developed Disney's CAPS system; Gary Krisel, President; and Bruce Cranston, vice president of development. Krisel and Cranston will spearhead DreamWorks' participation in TV animation for broadcast, cable and direct-to-video.

"I predicted this back in the trades when Katzenberg set up the studio," Hulett says. "I thought there would be quite a number of people who would leave Disney to go work for DreamWorks because they liked working with Jeffrey. It's going to be a different working environment.

"Disney is unhappy about it: 'Well, how could you stab us in the back? We've been a family.' It's nothing personal, but I was at Disney as a member of the 'family' [as a staff writer] for almost 10 years. When it became inconvenient to have me around, they put me up for 'adoption.' So much for 'family.'

"What I impart to people when they call me is, don't get all dewy-eyed and emotional over *where* you work," Hulett says. "Studios are rather cold-blooded and ruthless about who they hire and fire. They're not a benevolent uncle. They're a thing. I tell people to be professional, do your best work, and look out for your own best interests. Because in the course of your lifetime, you'll probably work at several different studios."

With a bit of restoration polish, *Cinderella* dances again onto home video this October.

Hulett indicates another studio shunted aside in the publicity battle between Disney and DreamWorks SKG. "They're too savvy and powerful a studio to be counted out," he says, "because they're going into this for the long haul."

Of course, you know, this means Warners.

Warner Bros. Goes on a Quest: On May 29, the WB Feature Animation unit announced their first movie, after over a year of deliberating. It's *The Quest for the Grail*. The producers are Sue Kroyer and Frank Gladstone; the directors are Bill Kroyer (*FernGully*) and Frederick DuChau. Gladstone was formerly Disney's Florida recruiter. Another executive who helped staff Disney's Florida animation unit, Max Howard, became the new president of Warner Bros. Feature Animation on June 26. Howard is reportedly very supportive of the needs of animation artists. However, Disney claims that Howard breached a contract with them by going to Warners, and is suing Time-Warner Inc., Time-Warner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros.

The hero of *The Quest for the Grail* is Susannah, an idealistic young woman living in the time of King Arthur, who seeks the Holy Grail to save her sister from a powerful knight. The story is based on *The King's Damsel*, a novel by Vera Chapman. Elizabeth Chandler is the screenwriter. *Quest* is scheduled for a late 1997 release.

Projects in development include *Bluebeard* and *The Iron Giant*; dropped from priority consideration are *The Snow Queen* and *King Tut*.

Meanwhile, Warner Bros. Classic Animation is starting their own feature, a live-action/animated story involving basketball star Michael Jordan with the Looney Tunes cast. Tentatively titled *Hare Time* (a.k.a. *Space Jam*), the animated portions are being directed by former *Animaniacs* producer Rich Arons. Another unit is working on a 3D stereoscopic animation/CGI film, "Duck Dodgers in the third Dimension," also starring Marvin the Martian. The division's latest short, "Carrot-blanca," was released August 25 with *The Amazing Panda Adventure*. This presentation is for Warners' theme parks in Germany and Australia.

Chuck Jones continues to do new Looney Tunes shorts with his own production company subcontracting to Warners. "Another Froggy Evening" has been completed, a prequel of sorts to "One Froggy Evening." This time, Michigan J. Frog appears in several eras of the past, including Roman times. Also now in the works: "Superior Duck" and "Duck Amuck Redux," and a Tweety and Sylvester short written by *Timon & Pumbaa* executive producer/story editor Roberts Gannaway.

DreamWorks Gears for Production: Their first project will be *Prince of Egypt* (formerly *The Ten Commandments*), co-directed by Brenda Chapman, written by Carl Binder and Susannah Grant (who co-wrote *Pocahontas*), with a score by Hans (*The Lion King*) Zimmer and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz (lyricist of *Pocahontas*). It's scheduled for Thanksgiving 1998.

In development is *Cortez*, written by Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, who co-wrote *Aladdin*. *Prince Charming* will be scored by Grammy-winning composer and producer David Foster and lyricist Donald Black (*Sunset Blvd.* and *Aspects of Love*).

Spielberg's Amblimation unit, which was still doing pre-production on the animated version of the Broadway musical *Cats*, will instead merge

Froggy John Cleese croaks charmingly in *The Swan Princess*, now on video.

with DreamWorks. Their last project was *Balto*, which will be released this Thanksgiving. *Cats* has been postponed indefinitely.

***Swan* on Home Video:** On November 18, 1994, Nest Entertainment's *The Swan Princess* was released theatrically to critical success, but was trounced at the box office by *The Santa Clause*, *Star Trek Generations* and a re-release of *The Lion King*. Now, audiences have a chance to see it again—and again, and again, on home video. Both laserdisc and home video versions were released last month; $24.98 for the video, and $29.99 for the laserdisc from Image Entertainment. As a bonus, the 90-minute tape features a music video of "Eternity," performed by the Japanese musical group Dreams Come True. A Spanish-dubbed version is also available.

Swan and *The Pebble and the Penguin* are among the last major animated releases colored the old-fashioned way, with ink and paint.

A candidate for the person with the most credits ever in an animated feature is Steven E. Gordon, who on *Swan Princess* has *13*! To wit: Character design; storyboard; character animation director; animator for Prince Derek, Young Derek and Odette; The Hag and Horses; supervising animator for Princess Odette, Rothbart, The Swan and Young Bromley; and key animator on Bromley. He also sculpted some of the character maquettes. Whew!

Astro Boy, Lost and Found: When Ozamu Tezuka produced *Astro Boy* in 1963, there was one episode he found unsatisfactory, and in fact, ordered copies of it destroyed. However, a copy had already been sent to NBC to be dubbed into English by producer Fred Ladd. The Right Stuf International is making this story available on home video. According to them, episode #34, "The Beast from 20 Fathoms," doesn't exist anywhere in Japan, not even on the omnibus *Tetsuwan Atom* laserdisc collection.

Gen Art Courtesy Orion Home Video

Orion Home Video gets a foot up by unleashing Streamline Pictures' *Barefoot Gen*.

Astro Boy: The Lost Episode retails for $14.95. It also has a companion episode, "The Snow Lion," for a total of 50 minutes. The episodes are in their original black and white, mono presentation.

Disney on Home Video: *Cinderella* returns as a home video release on October 4, as part of the Masterpiece Collection series. This was Walt Disney's 12th animated feature, first released to theaters in 1950. Its first video release in 1988 sold seven million copies. Disney claims the film has undergone an extensive restoration process using technology not available in 1988. Now, the 76-minute video will sell for $26.99 and the laserdisc will retail at $29.99. General Mills and Kodak are offering up to $15 in mail-in rebates.

For the video, a Deluxe Collector's Edition will be available for $79.99, which includes *The Making of Cinderella* on videocassette, an illustrated hardcover book and a reprint of *Cinderella* artwork. A CAV Deluxe Laserdisc Collectors Edition, retailing for $99.99, contains the documentary and the same materials as in the deluxe video version.

Other laserdisc releases include *TRON* and *The Three Caballeros*, which will feature *Saludos Amigos* and *The Pelican and the Snipe*. The sales of these discs will determine whether there will be any further releases of vintage Mickey Mouse or Silly Symphony cartoons, because the first set of black-and-white Mickeys didn't sell well on laserdisc.

Walt Disney Home Video has released two volumes of "Aladdin's Arabian Adventures," two 45-minute videos containing two episodes from the series, priced at $12.99. *Creatures of Invention* has "Getting the Bugs Out" and "The Sands of Fate"; *Magic Makers* has "Never Say Nefir" and "The Citadel."

Dogs Delayed: MGM has decided to delay the release of *All Dogs Go to Heaven II* to next spring. The feature is being mostly animated by Don Bluth's former studio, Don Bluth Ireland, which has changed its name to Screen Animation Ireland Limited. Incidentally, this studio is also animating an OVA for release this Thanksgiving, *The Story of Daniel Boone*, directed by former *Tiny Toons* designer/director Ken Boyer.

Pocahontas Power: On June 16, *Pocahontas* began playing in six theaters, earning $2.7 million, the biggest-grossing film in limited release, according to the studio. A week later, its first weekend in wide release on 2,569 screens earned it a whopping $29.5 million for a two-week total of $34.5 million. For Disney, this is the second-best opening weekend; the best was *The Lion King*, which earned $40.9 million in its first three days.

Disney premiered the film in New York City's Central Park on June 10, screening it for 110,000 people (though only 100,000 tickets were available). The city was paid $1 million for the use of the park; Disney spent about $5 million on the event.

Disney Gets Goofy: During its 10-week run from April 7 to June 15, *A Goofy Movie*—made at a cost of $22 million—earned a respectable $32.7 million at the box office.

As of September 6, it has been released to video.

The 78-minute feature is presented on videotape in digitally mastered stereo sound and is closed-captioned for the hearing-impaired. *A Goofy Movie* was the last movie done by Disney TV Animation's Paris unit, before that unit was transferred to the control of Disney Feature Animation to work on "Runaway Brain" and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

You can buy the video for $22.99, with a $4 mail-in rebate and a free 26" x 40" *Goofy* poster offer from Disney. The film was directed by Kevin Lima, who's going to co-direct *Tarzan* for Disney, and written by Jymn Magon, Chris Matheson and

Brian Pimental.

Coincidentally, Kevin Lima happens to be married to Brenda Chapman, co-director of *Prince of Egypt* for rival DreamWorks. With both *Tarzan* and *Prince* beginning production, it's conceivable that both will be released in the same year, 1998!

Disney TV Update: Robin Williams will be reprising the role of the Genie in *Aladdin and the King of Thieves*, the second *Aladdin* OVA, to be released sometime next year. This means scrapping the soundtrack with Dan Castellaneta as the Genie (as he is in the series and in *The Return of Jafar*) and several months' worth of storyboard production. This delay has also affected the start of another OVA, *The Lion King II: Simba's Pride*.

Even before *Timon & Pumbaa* hits the Disney Afternoon, a second season of 13 half-hours is in the works, produced by Jeff DeGrandis. Another 12 episodes have been made specifically for CBS this fall. Style-wise, *T&P* is closer to *Shnookums and Meat* than it is to *The Lion King*.

Nathan Lane will be reprising Timon the meerkat in only 11 episodes. He has since committed to *Birds of a Feather* with Robin Williams, the American movie version of the play *La Cage au Folles*. Timon's new voice belongs to Quinton Flynn, who you can hear as Johnny Storm, the Human Torch on the new season of *The Fantastic Four*.

Timon actually *dies* in an episode, "Timon's Time Togo," after he eats a poisonous bug. Does he stay dead? Not if Disney's merchandising divisions can help it.

Ernie Sabella continues his role as the flatulent warthog, Pumbaa. And Robert Guillaume reprises the wise baboon Rafiki in his own 11-minute shorts, "Rafiki's Fables," two for CBS and two for The Disney Afternoon. One episode, "Rafiki's Apprentice," was apparently inspired by *Fantasia*. It seems Rafiki's ambitious nephew, Nefu, swipes his magic walking stick and—well, you know what happens.

Also appearing in their own shorts are *The Lion King*'s Shenzi, Banzai and Ed. "The Laughing Hyenas" appear twice on CBS and twice on the Disney Afternoon. Tress MacNeille (voice of Babs Bunny and Dot Warner) and Rob Paulson (The Mask and Yakko Warner) replace Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin as Shenzi and Banzai, respectively. Jim Cummings will once again giggle for Ed, who, incidentally was named after Ed McMahon. Ho, ho-ho-ho.

Whereas "Rafiki's Fables" and "The Laughing Hyenas" take place in Africa, *Timon & Pumbaa*'s" adventures take place all over the world. And of course, amid all the slapstick, everyone will be learning their lessons. This will make parents and the FCC very happy.

A new, recurring character is Quint, short for "quintessential character," a human who appears throughout the series in different roles. He'll be voiced by Corey Burton (who has voiced James Bond Jr., Gruffi Gummi and Toadwart).

Brian Cummings and Townsend Coleman voice two vultures who enforce the law of the jungle; they speak in monotone and finish each other's sentences. Frank Welker voices a snooty elephant, Ned, in two episodes, "Unlucky in Lesotho" and "Uganda Be an Elephant."

On CBS, three music videos will be shown: "The Lion Sleeps Tonight," "Stand By Me," and "Yummy, Yummy, Yummy," to wedge in appearances by Simba. The lion king returns in the episode, "Shake Your Djibouti," in which Timon and Pumbaa try to restore his self-confidence and predator instincts. If only CBS would allow him to kill his prey on Saturday morning.

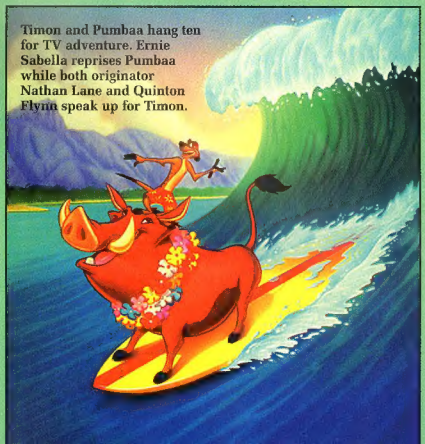
Robotech's 10th Anniversary is this year. To celebrate, the Robocon 10 Convention will be at the Grand Hotel in Anaheim, California on October 6-8. Confirmed guests include the series' creator, producer and story editor, Carl Macek; Ulpio Minucci, music producer and composer; Arlon Ober, orchestrator, composer and songwriter; Steve Kramer, script editor and voice of Angelo Dante, Ardwright Chamberlain (Ambassador Kosh on *Babylon 5*) and other cast members. For details, send a SASE to Robocon 10, PO Box 3206, Anaheim, CA 92803.

What's significant about this event is that rarely, if ever, has a fan-driven convention been dedicated to an American cartoon series. Not *Batman*, *Jonny Quest*, *Garfield* or even *Scooby Doo*!

Robotech, an 85-episode epic about interstellar conflict spanning three generations, was a compilation of three Japanese series: *Super Dimensional Fortress Macross*, *Super Dimensional Cavalry Southern Cross* and *Genesis Climber Mospeada*. Streamline Pictures has just released the six volumes in a series of *Robotech Perfect Collection* videos, each containing two episodes of *Robotech* and two corresponding episodes in the original, uncut Japanese, with English subtitles. Each 90-minute volume retails for $19.98.

—Bob Miller

***A Goofy Movie* is now a Goofy video, too. Goofy fans can even get a free Goofy poster.**



Timon and Pumbaa hang ten for TV adventure. Ernie Sabella reprises Pumbaa while both originator Nathan Lane and Quinton Flynn speak up for Timon.

Art: Copyright 1995 Buena Vista Television

Scooby Doo Art: Copyright 1993 Hanna-Barbera Productions Inc.

COMICS REPORTER

COMICS SCREEN

All of these projects are live-action unless specified. Those boxed are new or updated office last listing. **Not everything listed will ultimately ever be made.** S: script; D: director; P: producer; EP: executive producer; C: creator; AN: animated; LA: live-action; Syn: syndicated; HB: Hanna-Barbera; Nel: Nelvana; WD: Disney; WB: Warner Bros.; PP: Paramount; U: Universal; Col: Columbia; Am: Amblin; DH: Dark Horse; FR: Film Roman; QDE: Quincy Davis Entertainment; M: Miramax. **Attn. all pros:** Info to be added to this list is cheerfully invited. Send to COMICS SCENE, 475 Park Ave. South, 8th Flr., NY, NY 10016. (Info as of 8/11/95)

Accident Man. Film. S: Pat Mills, Tony Skinner.

Adventure Man. AN. WB. WB Net.

The Airtight Garage. AN. EP: Kurosawa Ent. P: Philippe Rivier. D: Moebius, Katsuhiro Otomo. S: Randy Lofficier.

Animaniacs. AN. series WB Net.

Annie & the Tomorrow Team. AN. TV project. Fremantle. Also ***Annie II.*** TV movie. S: Trish Soodik. D: Ian Toynton. W/George Hearn, Joan Collins. ABC.

Archie. Film. S: Keith Giglio, Juliet Aires. P: Ben Myron. U.

The Badger. Film/TV. PP.

Barbarella. Film. Nel.

❑ **Barb Wire.** Film. V/DH. W/Pamela Lee. D: David Hogan. P: Mike Richardson, Todd Moyer, Brad Wyman.

Beavis and Butt-head. AN film. S: Mike Judge.

Betty Boop. AN film. S: Jerry Rees. EP: R. Fleischer, R. Zanuck.

Biker Mice from Mars. Film. P: Al Ruddy, Andre Morgan, David Chan. S: Greg Johnson.

❑ **Black Widow.** TV movie. Fox.

Blade. S: David S. Goyer.

❑ **Broom Hilda.** Film. Fox.

Captain Thunder & Blue Bolt. Film. PP. P: Joe Wizan. Consultants: Roy & Dann Thomas.

Captain Zoom. Made-for-cable film.

❑ **Casper.** AN series. U/Harvey An. Feb. '96. Fox.

Catwoman. Film. WB. S: Dan Waters.

Cisco Kid. TV movie sequel. W/Jimmy Smits, Cheech Marin. D: Luis Valdez. S: David Taylor. TNT.

The Crow: City of Angels. Film sequel. D: Tim Pope. S: David Goyer. W/ Vincent Perez (see article).

Crying Freeman. Film. D: C. Gans. Shot.

Cyberforce. AN. Pilot. Fox. Graz Ent. Top Cow.

Daredevil. Film. Fox. D: Carlo Carlei. S: Carlei, Chris Columbus. P: Ben Myron, Tony Ludwig, Alan Riche.

Dennis the Menace. Sequel. S: Tim McCanlies.

Dr. Strange. Film. S: David S. Goyer. Col.

Donkey Kong Country. AN series. Nel.

❑ **Doom's IV.** Film. P/S: Rob Liefeld. Am. (see article)

❑ **Dudley Do-Right.** Film. P: Joe Singer, John Davis.

Dungeons & Dragons. Film. Sweetpea Ent. S: Topper Lilien & Carroll Cartwright.

Elfquest. AN film. P: Ed Pressman, Jeremy Chechik.

Fantastic Four. Film. D: Chris Columbus.

Faust. Film. D: Stuart Gordon. S: David Quinn.

Felix the Cat. AN. FR. CBS.

Fist of the North Star. Film. D: Tony Randel. Shot.

Flash Gordon. Film. S: Steven de Souza. P: Ben Myron, Rick Karo, David Helpern. Madalay-Sony.

Freakazoid. AN series. WB/Am.

From Hell. Film.

Gen 13. AN film. D: Kevin Altieri. Wildstorm Prods.

❑ **Generation X.** TV movie. Fox.

Ghost Rider. Film. S: David S. Goyer. Savoy.

Gothik. Film. P: Jeff Most.

Grimjack. Film.

Hate. AN Film. S: Peter Bagge. Colossal Pictures.

Incredible Hulk. Film. U. P: GA. Hurd.

Inspector Gadget. Film. S: J. Loeb III, M. Weisman. U.

❑ **Iron Man.** Film. S: Andrew Chapman. P: John Langley, Elie Cohn, Stephen Chao. EP: Avi Arad, Stan Lee. Fox.

❑ **Jonny Quest.** AN & LA films. New AN series. Due out fall '96.

Kull. Film. U. S: C. Pogue.

Lt. Blueberry. Film.

Little Lulu. AN. Lulu: Tracey Ullman.

Lost Universe. Film. M.

Luke Cage. Film. D (&P): John Singleton. S: John Doughrity. P: Ed Pressman.

Machine. Film. P: Larry Gordon. DH. U.

❑ **Mad.** TV Saturday late night series. Fox.

❑ **Madman.** Film.

Mark 5. Film. S: William Wisher, Nick Sagan.

❑ **The Mask.** AN series. FR. CBS. Film sequel w/Jim Carrey & Cameron Diaz. D: Chuck Russell.

The Maxx. MTV AN series.

Mega Man. AN syn series.

❑ **The Men in Black.** Film. Col/Am. W/Tommy Lee Jones. D: Barry Sonnenfeld.

❑ **Mickey Mouse.** New shorts. WD. (see article)

❑ **Mike Danger.** Film.

Mr. Hero. Film. M.

Mr. Magoo. Film.

Modesty Blaise. Film. M. P: Marcelo Anciano, Michael Berrow.

Momma. AN project. Colossal Pictures.

Mutant Chronicles. Film. P: Ed Pressman. S: Philip Eisner.

NeverEnding Story. AN. Nel.

Nexus. AN film. HB.

❑ **Nick Fury.** TV movie. Fox.

Peanuts. Film. P/S: John Hughes. WB.

❑ **The Phantom.** Film. PP. Alive again. W/Billy Zane. D: Simon Wincer. AN series. 13 new episodes.

Pinky & the Brain. AN series. WB/Am. WB Net.

Pit Bulls. Film. P: Larry Gordon. DH. U.

Plastic Man. Film. WB/Am.

Prince Valiant. Film. S: M. Beckner, Roger Kumble, Marlene King, Neue Constantin.

❑ **Prophet.** Film. TriStar. P: Rob Liefeld. (see article)

❑ **The Punisher.** NBC TV movie.

❑ **Richie Rich.** AN series. Fall '96. U/Harvey.

Rock City. Film. Blue Turtle.

The Rocky Horror Show. AN series. Nel.

❑ **The Saint.** Film. PP. D: Philip Noyce.

Sandman. Film. S: Ted Elliott, Terry Rossio. P: Oren Koules, Alan Riche.

Sand Sharks. AN. DIC.

Sgt. Rock. Film. P: Joel Silver. S/D: John Milius. WB.

❑ **Scooby Doo.** Film. S: Craig Titley. Turner.

Silver Surfer. Film. S: John Turman. Neue Constantin.

❑ **She-Hulk.** CBS.

❑ **Spawn.** Film. S: Alan McElroy. New Line. AN series. HBO.

❑ **Speed Racer.** Film. S: J.J. Abrams. WB. Summer 1996 bow. Johnny Depp may star.

Spider-Man. Film.

The Spirit. LA & AN projects. P: M. Uslan, B. Melniker.

❑ **Street Fighter.** AN. Graz & Capcom USA.

Stretch Armstrong. Film. D: William Dear. S: Mike Werb, Michael Colleary.

❑ **Superman.** Film. S: Jonathan Lemkin. AN series. WB.

❑ **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles IV.** Film. S: Christian Ford, Roger Soffer. D: Eric Allard. MPCA.

Terry & the Pirates. TV.

Vampirella. Film.

V for Vendetta. Film. S: Hilary Henkin. P: Joel Silver. WB.

❑ **Venom.** Film.

Virus. Film. DH. S: Chuck Pfarrer. P: Gale Anne Hurd. U.

X. Film. DH. U.

X-Men. Film. Fox. P: Lauren Shuler-Donner. S: Andrew Kevin Walker.

Yummy Fur. Film. D: Bruce McDonald. Yorktown Prods.

Zen Intergalactic Ninja. Film. D: Brian Yuzna.

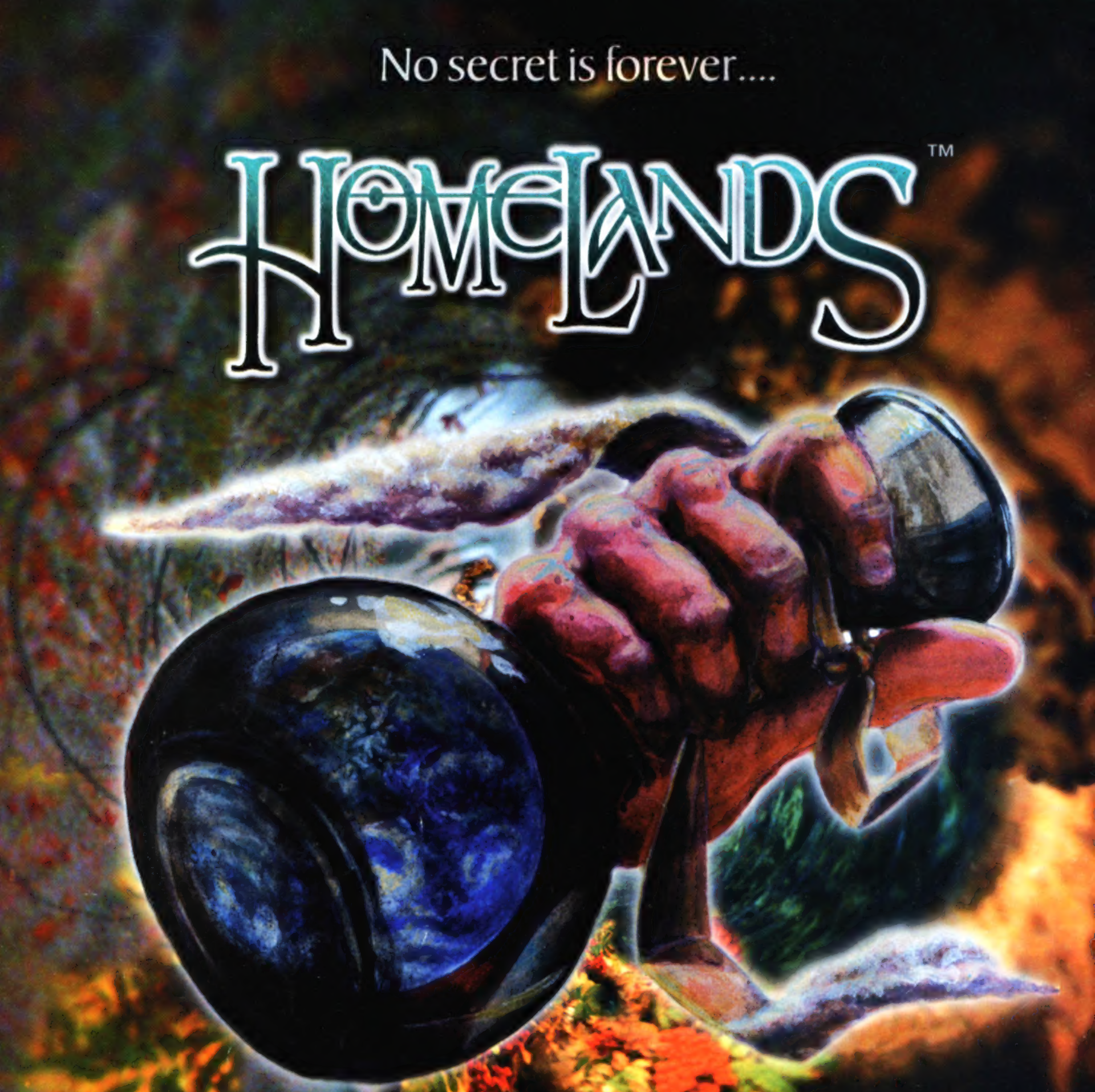
Zorro. Film. D: Robert Rodriguez. TriStar. S: Terry Rossio, Ted Elliott.

List copyright © 1995 Starlog Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

Marvel, all Marvel characters and the distinctive likenesses thereof: TM and © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All Rights Reserved.
OverPower: TM and © 1995 Fleer Entertainment Group, Inc. Produced and distributed by Fleer Entertainment.

No secret is forever....

HOMELANDS™



Homelands™, the newest limited-edition card set for Magic: The Gathering™, brings you a forgotten world, hidden away for generations by a mysterious wizard. Discover the extraordinary secrets within, and discover all that is *Homelands*.

MAGIC The Gathering™

Fall '95 • 8-card booster pack $1.75

Wizards of the Coast Customer Service (206) 624-0933

Wizards OF THE COAST

Homelands and **Magic: The Gathering** are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. WIZARDS OF THE COAST is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Illustration by Heather Hudson. ©1995 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. All rights reserved.